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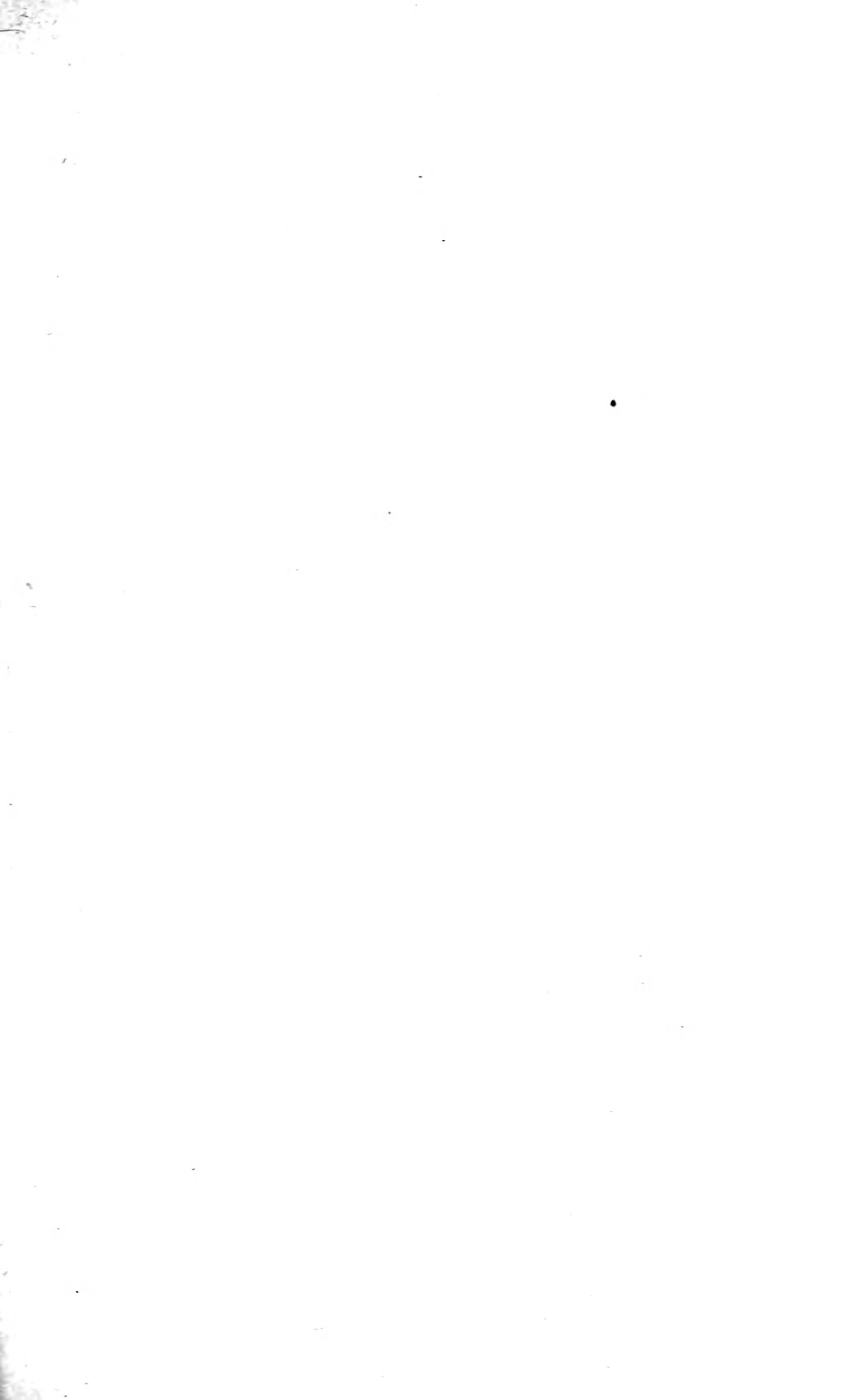
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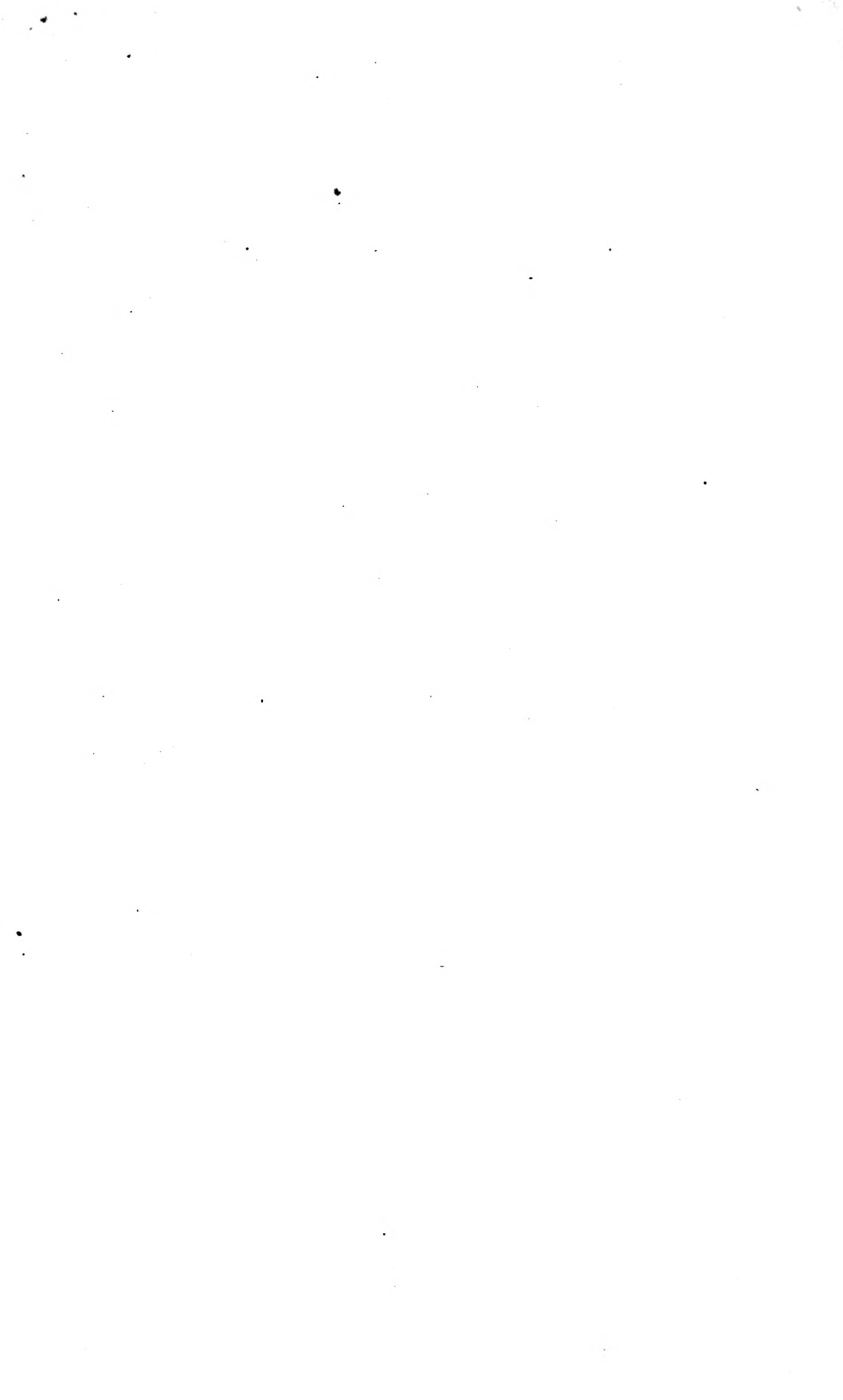
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THE VICISSITUDES OF A LIFE.



THE VICISSITUDES OF A LIFE.

A Novel.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
VICISSITUDES OF A LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DROP OF GALL.

HAVING told Father Bonneville that I should spend two or three days in London, and directed my portmanteau to be sent to a small, but comfortable hotel at the end of Brook-street, I rode straight to a livery stable near Charing-cross, where I was accustomed to put up my horse, and left him there. I then walked on along Pall-mall, meditating my future course, with more calmness and consideration than I had hitherto given to the subject. In regard to one point, my heart was now at rest. Mariette was

found—was to be mine—and I had but one great thought for object and endeavour. I had not reached the end of St. James's-street, when I saw before me a tall, fine, stately figure which seemed somewhat familiar to me, walking slowly and deliberately onward, and I turned my head to look at the face as I passed.

“ Good morning, Monsieur de Lacy,” said the Earl of N——, in a frank and easy tone. “ Whither away so fast, this morning? ”

I paused, and took the two fingers he extended to me, saying, “ I am going to Brook-street, my Lord.”

“ Ah, to see Charles,” he answered; “ well, I will walk with you part of the way,” and he put his arm through mine, leaning on me somewhat heavily.

I did not wish my thoughts interrupted, and would have gladly got rid of him, had he been any other man; but there were various vague feelings in my bosom, which made that old

nobleman's society not unpleasant to me, even then ; and at his slow pace we proceeded. He was silent for a moment, and then, looking round toward me, he said, " Why you are as tall as I am, Monsieur de Lacy."

" As nearly the same height, I suppose, as possible," I answered. " I had thought your lordship the taller man, from your carrying yourself so upright, I imagine."

" And from my white hair, perhaps," replied the old nobleman. " When we see mountains capped with snow, we are often inclined to think them higher than they are. But how is this, Monsieur de Lacy, Charles tells me you are a Protestant?"

" I am so, my lord," I replied, " and have been so for some years."

" Keep to that, keep to that," rejoined the earl, with an approving nod of the head. " You will find it better for your temporal and your eternal interests."

“There is no chance, I believe, of my changing any more, my lord,” I answered, “as my conversion from the Church of Rome, was the work of patient examination and sincere conviction, I am not likely to retread my steps.”

“I am glad to hear it, I am very glad to hear it,” he answered, and then seemed as if he were about to say something more, but stopped short, and turned the conversation to other subjects.

“Have you heard,” he asked, “that your King, Louis the Eighteenth, is now in England? Our wise governors have refused to recognise him under that title. They wish to leave themselves a loop hole for recognising the usurper, and so make him call himself the Count de Lille. They will soon find the folly of such feeble and wavering policy. It is my maxim, when I draw the sword, to throw away the scabbard; but, heaven help us, we are sadly ruled.”

I enquired where the king had taken up his

residence, and then said, that I should certainly go down and pay my respects to him.

“ Indeed ! ” exclaimed the earl, with some signs of surprise. “ Are you sure of a good reception ? Consult Charles—you had better consult Charles. He is a very good counsellor in all such circumstances. Withdrawing as much as I can from public life, I am not the best authority in matters of this kind ; and now I must leave you—good bye. Tell Charles to let me know how he is.”

Thus saying, he turned into one of the club-houses in St. James’s-street, and I walked on.

When I had reached the end of Brook-street, and was just approaching the door of the hotel, I saw two persons coming towards me who attracted my attention by the loudness and vivacity with which they were talking French. One was a tall, thin, elderly man, dressed in black silk stockings, and knee breeches. He was very well dressed ; but had more the air of a dancing master than a gentleman.

The other was a little old woman, brisk and active in all her movements, and jabbering away to her companion in her native tongue with vast volubility. The face was very peculiar, and had it been possible for me to conceive that a silk gown would ever cover the back, or a velvet bonnet ornament the head of my old friend Jeannette, I should have claimed acquaintance with her at once. She recognised me better, notwithstanding all the changes that had come over my personal appearance since we parted in Switzerland.

“ *Bon Dieu!*” she cried, stopping in the midst of the pavement, somewhat to the surprise and admiration of the passengers. “ Is it possible? Yes; it must be. My dear Louis, do you not recollect Jeanette?”

“ Very well indeed, Jeanette,” I replied, taking both her hands; but the good woman was in a state of ecstasy that defied all restraint. She cried, she laughed, and I verily believe she would have danced, too, in the middle of Brock-

street, had I not held her tight by both the hands, while her companion endeavoured to soothe her by repeating a dozen times, “*Mais Jeanette—Mais Mademoiselle!*” There was something so indescribably ludicrous in her expression of satisfaction, that I believe I should soon have laughed too, as well as the passengers; and, as my only resource, I took her and her companion into the hotel, to which I had written to have rooms prepared for me. When she was safely seated there, and somewhat quieted, she told me in a very mysterious manner that she had just been talking about me to “somebody;” but somebody had never told her that I was in England. Her words, and more still, her mysterious manner raised expectations which were not fulfilled. After a good deal of pressing, I obtained from her the fact that this “somebody” of whom she spoke was no other than Charles Westover, and I found that the man who accompanied her was an old valet de chambre of the

Earl of N——. This was not altogether satisfactory to me ; but yet it was another link in the evidence, showing—to my mind beyond a doubt—that there was some connection between my own fate and the earl's family.

I soon sent away the valet de chambre, telling him that I would take care Jeannette should return in safety ; and I felt half inclined to go with her, and demand explanations of the earl himself. A very brief reflection, however, determined me to forbear ; but I questioned Jeanette closely concerning my own history, and that of my family. She was very unwilling to speak, evaded my questions, gave me ambiguous replies, and when pressed very hard, sought woman's usual refuge with tears, sobbing forth, “ I must not break my vow, my dear boy—I must not break my vow.”

I could not bring myself to ask her more ; but I turned to another point, saying, “ Well, Jeanette, if you are bound by a vow not to

“speak on those subjects, tell me at least, do you know anything of the Marquis de Carcassonne?”

The poor woman’s face assumed an expression of horror not easily to be forgotten. “Know him!” she exclaimed; “know that terrible man! Oh yes, Louis, I know him too well. He ruined as happy a family as ever lived, and destroyed as noble a gentleman as was in all the world.”

Her words seemed to change my blood to fire; but I asked, as coolly as I could, “Can you tell me how it was done, Jeanette?”

“Oh no,” she answered. “I was but a poor ignorant servant, and did not hear any of his ways and arts, at least to understand them. All I know is, what it came to. I can’t tell you any more; but he is a dreadful man. It makes me tremble, even to think of him.”

“Then I will go to him, and wring it from his heart,” I answered, fiercely; “for I know the whole, and expose the whole, I will.”

“Oh, don’t go near him, Louis—don’t go near him,” she cried, almost in a scream, joining her hands together, as if she were praying to a saint. “He is the destruction of every one who approaches him, and he will find means to destroy you, too.”

“I have seen him once,” I answered, “since I have been in England, and I will most certainly go to him again, Jeanette, and force him to confess all he has done. I have no fear of him,” I added, almost with a scoff, remembering the miserable object I had seen in Swallow Street. “He cannot harm me, Jeanette.”

“Stay, stay, Louis,” she cried, eagerly. “Good Father Noailles tells me he is sick, and that he must die—perhaps we could find a way, without your going near him. He will be terribly afraid of death, when it comes close to him. All the frightful things he has done will rise up before his eyes, when he feels that he is going to answer for them. He has sent for Father Noailles twice

already ; and the good man says that his mind is in a perilous state. Let me try, Louis—let me try—perhaps I can manage it.”

“ Whatever you do, you must do quickly, Jeanette,” I answered, “ for I can and will bear this suspense no longer.”

“ Well, well ; I will go this moment,” she said. “ But where can I find you, Louis, to tell you what I have done ?”

“ Here for the next three days,” I replied ; “ and after that at Blackheath. I will give you the address.”

I wrote it down for her, and then ordered a hackney coach to be called : but she did not direct it to drive to the house of the Earl of N——, which was in Berkeley-square ; but to a small street in Soho.

After she was gone, I paused again to think for a short time, and I resolved, notwithstanding the hopes she held out, to see the Marquis de Carcassonne myself. There was more than one

piece of information to be obtained from him, and I fancied that I could wring out of him the whole of that history which I was so anxious to learn. It would be better in the first place, I thought, to see Westover ; and I hurried away to his rooms, which were somewhat farther up the street.

I found him lying on a sofa, reading ; and my errand was soon told. “ I come to you for advice, Westover,” I said ; “ advice such as none but a friend—a sincere friend can give.” I then went on to tell him the cruel state of anxiety and agitation I was in, and expressed my intention of seeing the Marquis de Carcassonne myself. I mentioned my meeting with Jeanette, too, and that I found she had been talking with him of me and mine.

He heard the first part of what I said, gravely, and somewhat gloomily ; but smiled when I mentioned Jeanette, and replied frankly, “ I sent for her for the very purpose, De Lacy. It would not do for me, you know, to hold long conferences with pretty young maid servants in my grand-

father's house, and so I thought it better to have her here. So she told you nothing."

"Nothing," I replied. "She asserted that she was under a vow of secresy."

"That is very likely," he said; "but as to this Marquis de Carcassonne, I think you had better trust him to her. I see very well what she intends to do. She will go to the old priest Noailles, and get him to work upon the scoundrel's mind, under the fear of death and judgment. Some men almost always become cowards at the brink of the grave; and old Noailles is his confessor, I suppose. If he confesses all, Noailles, well prompted, may, perhaps, refuse him absolution, unless he does justice, however tardy, and thus we may get at the truth at length. It is no bad scheme of the old lady."

"Then do you know the truth yourself?" I asked, in some surprise.

He shook his head, answering, "I have moral

conviction, De Lacy ; but no proof ; and therefore cannot say I know the truth."

"I will go to him myself," I said, after thinking for a minute or two.

"Well, I do not see that it can do any harm," replied Westover, thoughtfully ; "but you had better go to him after dark, or probably you will not see him. Men suspect that both he and his apothecary carry on the lucrative occupation of spies, or at least that of conveying information and gold to France, where both are somewhat scarce just now. Then, there is another thing, De Lacy. I ask you, as a personal favor, if you can contrive to make this obdurate man speak, to let me know all that he has said, before you communicate it to any one else. I bind you by no other engagement. Will you promise me this?"

"Willingly," I answered. "As soon as I know the truth, I shall be glad that all the world knows it also."

“That as we shall judge hereafter,” said Westover, with a significant smile; “and now will you stay and dine with me. We have time for a ride, or a walk before the dinner hour.”

I declined, however, for I felt myself in no state of mind to enjoy society, and returning to the hotel, I sat there in uneasy pondering, till the sky began to turn gray. I then walked out, and passed down Swallow-street; but it was not yet dark enough for my purpose. I proceeded therefore to the end of the street, took a turn through those long-forgotten alleys which led to St. James' Market, and walked back again, while a dingy man with a red flaming, and stench-emitting link, ran up and down a ladder at every house before me, lighting the dim lamps, which were the only illumination of London, before the modern improvement of gas. Just as I approached the door of the apothecary, I saw that worthy gentleman issue forth, with coat tightly buttoned up, and hat pressed down upon his brows; and

not wishing to call him back to his shop, I passed by a few steps, and then returned. When I entered I found no one but a small servant boy, or apprentice, at the counter ; and simply saying I wished to speak to Monsieur de Carcassonne, I approached the foot of the stairs by which I had mounted before. The boy seemed to hesitate as to whether he should try to stop me or not ; but, at length, when I had the door leading to the staircase in my hand, he said, “ You had better take a light,” and handed me a lamp. As I mounted the steps, in a foul, close atmosphere, which below had the odour of drugs, and above that of confined, and deteriorated air, I heard a frequent and rattling cough sounding from the upper rooms, and I judged by the peculiar voice it made, that the life of the cougher was not worth many days’ purchase. I knocked at the door of the Marquis de Carcassonne, as a mere matter of ceremony ; but without waiting, opened it and went in. I found him seated in nearly the same

position as when I previously saw him, before the fire of his little stove grate ; but though the room smelt of food, there was no cooking going on.

He was greatly altered. His face was white and blue, and had become exceedingly meagre : his whole person shrunk, and his eyes full of a vivacious anxiety which I have often since remarked in the last stages of organic diseases. He had got a newspaper in his hand, which in true French spirit he was reading eagerly by the light of a single, sweaty tallow candle that required incessant snuffing. But he instantly raised his eyes above the edge of the paper, looking towards the door, with a somewhat perturbed expression of countenance. At first he gazed at me without the slightest trace of recognition on his face ; but I was not in a frame of mind to be abashed or daunted by the look of any man. There was a stern, earnest determination in my heart which could meet a sneer, or an insult, or a threat, with equal indifference.

He rose up from his chair with habitual politeness; went through the customary bow with the customary grace; and then sank down again into his seat, unable to stand long upon his feet. I walked calmly and deliberately up to the side of the table, and without being invited, seated myself exactly before him.

I must not stay to scrutinize my feelings at that moment. It is enough to say that they were sufficiently fiendish. There he sat, the murderer of my father, the persecutor of my race—a worm—a snake—which wanted but one crush of my heel, as it seemed to me, to lie a mass of rotting corruption before me. Pity! I could feel no pity at that moment. All human charities seemed extinguished within me; and although I would not have injured the frail body for the world, yet I felt if I could have got at his spirit I would have torn it to pieces.

He looked at me in surprise and dismay, as in dull silence I drew a chair to the table and

sat down, gazing fixedly at him, as if I would have looked into his very soul. He said not a word, and after a pause, I asked, "Do you know me, Marquis de Carcassonne?"

"No," he said, in the shrill treble of age; and with a look of fear and agitation, shrinking back in his chair as far as he could; "No—the dead do not come back here below—that is a superstition—no; I do not know you; though you are like—very like—"

"I am Louis de Lacy," I said sternly.

"Ah!" he cried; "Ah!" and he put out his hand as if to push me off from him.

I could see him shiver and quake; and I went on, repeating the same words: "I am Louis de Lacy: the son of him you murdered. He is before you in my person. He speaks to you by my voice. He demands that you do justice to his memory, even now, when you are trembling on the brink of that grave beyond which you will soon meet face to face. Answer

me, Marquis de Carcassonne. Will you, at length, tell the truth? Will you do justice to the dead? Will you make the only atonement you can make to the murdered, before God puts his seal upon your obduracy, and you go to judgment for your crimes, unconfessed, and unrepented of?"

The old man quivered in every limb, and his face was as pale as death; but he answered not a word, and I went on with a hardness of heart for which I have hardly forgiven myself yet. "You were once wealthy," I said; "and you are now poor: you were once the inhabitant of gilded halls, and soft, luxurious apartments: you are now in a miserable garret, wretched, and dark, and gloomy; your crimes have led not to greater wealth and opulence; not to comfort and indulgence; not to the objects of your ambition and desire; but to penury, distress, and want. There is a further step before you—a deep abyss, into which you seem inclined to plunge. The

grave is a colder dwelling than this : the tribunal of an all-seeing God more terrible than any you can appeal to here : the hell which you have dug for yourself more agonizing than even your conscience at this moment.

The very vehemence with which I spoke seemed to frustrate my own purpose, and to rouse in his decaying frame and sinking mind, a spirit of resistance which had formerly been strong within him. He grasped the arm of his chair. He sat upright. He moved his jaw almost convulsively, and then said with serpent bitterness, " So, so, son of a traitor. You would have me lie, would you, to recover for you your father's estates—to clear your name from the infamy that hangs upon it, and shall hang upon it to all eternity ? You would have me unsay all I have said, recant all I have sworn. But mark me, boy, I will put upon record before I die the confirmation of every charge against your treacherous father. I will leave it more deeply branded on his name than ever, that he deceived

his king, betrayed his country, renounced his honor, falsified his word, and sold himself to the enemy, and his name shall stand in the annals of the world as the blackest of traitors, and the basest of men. Ha, ha ! what are your threats now, fool ?”

I started up, and it was with great pain I kept my hands from him ; but I mastered my first rash impulse, and I said, “ Then I summon you to meet him whom you have belied and murdered, whom you still, unrepenting and unatoning, calumniate and accuse, before the throne of Almighty God, and to answer where falsehood is vain, and cunning is of no resource—where the truth is written on tables of light, and falsehood is blotted out in everlasting darkness—where hell and eternal damnation await remorseless crime, for every word you have uttered this night ! As your heart judges you, so feel, and so act. Die in peace and calm assurance ; or in horror, and terror, and despair.”

He shrank back, and back, and back into his

chair, and at the last words, he pressed his trembling hands upon his eyes, as if he would have shut out the fearful images I had presented to him. His face grew livid, and his whole frame heaved, as if the torture of the eternal flame had already seized upon him.

I know not whether I should have said more or not ; but a moment after I had ceased speaking, and while I still stood gazing at him writhing before me, the door opened, and a venerable-looking old man, dressed in black, entered the room. He gazed an instant in surprise at the pale and trembling wretch, and at me ; and then he asked in a stern and solemn tone, “ Who are you ? What have you done, young man ? ”

“ I am Louis de Lacy,” I answered coldly. “ That is the Marquis de Carcassonne, the murderer of my father. What I have done is what, if you are a priest, you should do—make a dark criminal tremble, before the way to atonement, and the gates of mercy are shut against him for

ever ;” and without waiting for any further question, I hurried away from the room, down the dark staircase, and out into the crowded street.

CHAPTER II.

LIGHT FROM THE PAST.

MY thoughts were in such a state of tumult and confusion that I cannot say I considered any thing for many minutes after I quitted the den of that old snake ; but I took my way, at once, towards Westover's lodgings, and told him all that had occurred.

“ You had better have left it to Jeanette, I believe,” he replied, with that mixture of worldly knowledge and pure high feeling which I had often remarked in him. “ You do not know how often, De Lacy, things can be accomplished by inferior agents and dirty tools, which all the skill and vigour of the clear-headed and high-minded

are unable to effect. You see, this good woman, and this good priest, would have no scruple whatever in employing means which you would not condescend to use. I trust you have not done much mischief—perhaps some good; but at all events, now take my advice, and leave the matter in the hands of Jeanette and her revered coadjutor.”

“There is no hope; there is no chance,” I said. “The man is as hard as the nether millstone.”

“We cannot tell what may be done,” replied Westover. “At all events, one thing is very clear. You can do nothing; so if I were you, I would take myself out of town, and not fret my spirit with thinking of it any more. By the way, how go on your affairs with the beauty among the roses?”

“As well as I could wish,” I replied with a smile, for he dexterously enough brought up happier images before my eyes. “She is to be mine,

but not just yet. However, I forgot to tell you, Westover, that I met your grandfather to-day, and he walked up St. James's-street with me."

"Ha! indeed?" said Westover, with a look of pleased surprise. "What did he say? How did he act?"

"Very kindly," I answered.

"Walked up St. James's-street with you?" repeated Westover. I nodded my head, and he asked, "Did he invite you to his house?"

"No," I replied; "nor gave any hint of such an intention."

A shade came over my friend's face again and he enquired, "What did he say?"

"Nothing very particular," I answered. "He told me that his Majesty, my king, had arrived at Yarmouth, and advised me to consult you as to whether I should go to pay my respects to him."

"By all means," replied Westover, eagerly, "by all means. Lose not a moment. Be one of

the first. Let us set off by the stage to-morrow morning."

"Do you propose to go with me then?" I asked.

"Oh yes, I had better," he replied; "I can introduce you to the King. I saw him some time ago in Livonia, and dined with him twice."

"Perhaps that may obviate your grandfather's objections," I said; "for he seemed to doubt whether I should be well received."

"I think you will," replied Westover, musing; "I think you will. I remember some conversation with the King, which makes me judge so. He can have had no reason to change his opinion since; at all events, I will see him first and ascertain."

He spoke very thoughtfully, and gave no explanation of the strange fact that he should have had a conversation, referring to myself, with Louis the Eighteenth, before he ever saw me. But during the last two or three months, one

circumstance after another, fact following fact, incident coming after incident, had accumulated a mass of little proofs which brought conviction to my mind that there was some strong, though secret bond between Westover's family and myself. However, I agreed to his proposal at once. He sent a servant to take places in the coach for the following day, and ere another night fell we were in Yarmouth.

We found that the King, with his small suite, was lodging in the same hotel with ourselves, and Westover at once sent to request an interview on the following morning, which was immediately promised, with a very courteous message in reply.

At the hour appointed he went, and I remained with some impatience, thinking him very long. Not more than half an hour, however, passed in reality, before he returned, saying, "Quick, De Lacy, his Majesty will see you at once. Go to him, go to him. He is prepared for you."

I went away accordingly, leaving him there, as he did not seem inclined to accompany me, and was introduced by a mere servant who was stationed at the door, into the poor, small drawing-room of the inn, which had been assigned to the French prince. I found an ordinary-looking man, somewhat inclined to corpulence—though he was not so fat as he afterwards became—standing near a table. His manners, however, if not his appearance, at once displayed the prince. He took one step forward, as if to meet me, and held out his hand to me, saying, “Monsieur de Lacy, I am very happy to see you. It is most grateful to me to receive such kind visits from my countrymen and fellows in misfortune. The attachment of some of the noblest hearts of France, is no slight compensation for all the ills I have suffered.”

I bent my head to his hand and kissed it, saying, “I trust, sire, that you never will find any of my name, or race, without that warm

attachment which I am sure your Majesty deserves.”

I had no intention whatsoever in this reply of leading up to anything ; but the King seemed to think I had some particular allusion, and answered at once, “ I am sure of it, Monsieur de Lacy. I always was quite sure of it. In your poor father’s case I never entertained a doubt. I was certain all through—to the very end, and am now—that he was the victim of a foul conspiracy. Kings can but act, you know, according to the lights that are permitted them, and I mean not to throw the slightest blame upon my poor brother. He acted by the advice of ministers whom he loved and respected. The judgment of a regularly-constituted court had been pronounced, and he cannot be censured for having suffered it to be carried into execution, contrary to all the impulses of his own heart. I could not have done so ; for I was fully convinced of your father’s innocence ; but his judgment was misled by a very artful knave.”

I was greatly agitated, but I replied, "I am so little aware, sire, of my father's fate and history, that I hardly comprehend your Majesty's meaning. With the mistaken motive of sparing me pain, I believe, I have been kept in ignorance of what I know must be a very sorrowful history."

"Your friends were wrong, Monsieur de Lacy. Very wrong, I think," replied the King. "It is but right and necessary that you should know the whole; for the vindication of your father's name may be a task which you have still to fulfil. Pray sit down, and I will give you a brief account of the matter; only let me hint, in the first place, that, for the present, you must drop the title of majesty with me. I am here only the Count de Lille."

"I, at least, can never forget that you are a king, and my king," I replied.

"Spoken like your father's son," said Louis, seating himself, and pointing to a chair, and he then proceeded thus:—"Your father, Monsieur

de Lacy, was a very gallant and distinguished officer, of an Irish family long settled in France. He was employed in England, for some time, in a diplomatic capacity ; and a few years after, was appointed to a command in one of our East India possessions. War had by this time broken out between France and England, and the great preponderance of the latter country in the east, rendered the maintenance of our territories there very difficult. The derangement of the finances, and the daily increasing embarrassments of the government, prevented our commanding officers, in distant parts of the world, from receiving sufficient support. Your father was besieged by the English, in a fortress, naturally very strong, but ill furnished with provisions, ammunition, or men. He made, what was considered by all at the time, a very gallant defence, but in the end, was forced to surrender the place upon an honourable capitulation. On his return to France, he was well received ; but his friends,

rather than himself, sought for some distinguishing mark of his sovereign's favour and approval, and demanded for him a high office at the court, which I happened to know was an object of eager ambition to a personage called the Marquis de Carcassonne—indeed, he applied to me for my interest in the matter, which I refused. Your father would certainly have obtained it; but there began to be spread rumours about the court, which soon assumed consistence and a very formidable aspect, to which various circumstances, and especially the fact of your father having married an English lady, gave undue weight. It was said that he had sold the fortress to the English; that he had surrendered long before it was necessary; that he had not obtained so favourable a capitulation as he might have done. The charges in the end became so distinct, that your father himself demanded to be tried. He was accordingly, what we call, put in accusation, and the cause was heard. One

little incident I must not forget. The Marquis de Carcassonne said, in the hearing of several persons who were sure to repeat his words, that it mattered not what was the result of the trial, as your father was sure to be pardoned, even if he were condemned. This observation was reported to the king, who said, with some warmth, that nothing should induce him to interfere with the sentence of the court, whatever it might be. At the trial, overpowering evidence, as it seemed to me, was brought forward to show the state of the fortress, and the utter impossibility of defending it longer than had been done; but on the other hand, to the surprise of every one, two letters were produced, purporting to be part of the correspondence between your father and the English general. Your father loudly declared that they were forgeries; but then came forward the Marquis de Carcassonne, who had had some correspondence with your father when in India, and swore distinctly that the letter purporting to

be the prisoner's, was verily in his handwriting. Many doubted—few believed this assertion. Various differences were pointed out between your father's hand and that in which the letter was written, and your father might probably have escaped. But two circumstances combined to destroy him. Public clamour was, at that time, raised to the highest pitch, in regard to the loss of our possessions in India ; it was necessary that there should be some victim to atone for the faults of a feeble and inefficient ministry, and at the same time, a man was brought forward to account for the discovery of these letters, by swearing that he had found them in your father's own cabinet. He was a mean apothecary of Paris, who was accustomed to go a good deal to the house, in attendance upon the servants. But he acknowledged the base act of having privately read and possessed himself of these documents. The man had been born upon the estate of the Marquis de Carcassonne, and brought up by his

father. This rendered his evidence suspicious, at least to me; but it weighed with the judges, and the result was that your father was condemned. I need not dwell upon all the horrible events that followed. Suffice it to say, that a man as brave and honourable, I believe, as ever lived, was executed unjustly, that a stain was cast upon a high and distinguished name, and that the whole of the fine estates of the family were confiscated."

I need hardly say with what emotion I listened to this detail, and I remained for several moments in silence, with my head bent down, and full of indignation and grief which I could not venture to express. The king saw how greatly I was affected, and very kindly strove to soothe me. "If it will be any comfort to you, Monsieur de Lacy," he said, "I give you the most solemn assurance, that I never for a moment believed your father guilty, and that should fortune ever restore us to our own country, I shall take the necessary steps for having your father's

sentence reversed, and his memory justified. I am not singular in my opinions upon this subject; for when the people recovered their senses, after your father's death, the indignation excited against his accusers was so great, that the apothecary who had produced the letters was forced to quit France."

"Was his name Giraud, Sire?" I asked.

The king bowed his head, and went on, "Perhaps if he is still living," he said, "the man might be induced to tell the truth. Monsieur de Carcassonne is still living, I know, but he also found it convenient to travel, and never obtained the post for which he played so deep a game. I am inclined to think the forgery was his; for I know that he forged the letters of a woman, and we therefore may well suppose he would not scruple to forge the letters of a man."

In the midst of all the many thoughts to which this account gave rise, one idea presented itself prominently to my mind. The king had men-

tioned that my mother was an English woman. Might he not tell me who she was? But just as I was about to put the question, three other French gentlemen were introduced, and I was obliged to refrain for the time, although I determined to seek another opportunity of making the enquiry. I retired then with an expression of my gratitude, and rejoined Westover in our little sitting room.

He inquired eagerly into the particulars of my interview with the king, and I related to him the whole.

“Is that all,” he said, “Did he tell you nothing more?”

“Nothing, Westover,” I answered; “but we were interrupted before my audience was fairly at an end. He told me,” I added, somewhat emphatically, “who my father was, and what was his unhappy fate. He did not tell me who my mother was, but that I will soon know, Westover.”

My friend mused in silence for some minutes, and then said, "Let us first see what can be made of this Marquis de Carcassonne. I have great hopes in the skill and policy of your good old Jeanette, and the priest. If we could but get the old reprobate to die a little faster, the whole thing might be settled very soon."

"He looked very much like a dying man when I left him," I replied.

"Nay, that would be too quick," said Westover. "We must leave them time to work upon him. Don't you go near him again, de Lacy, for fear you should blow the candle out when you most need the light. And now, let us go and take a sail upon the sea, and then away to London by the early coach to-morrow."

I followed his guidance, with the full and strong conviction that he wished me well, and at an early hour on the following day, we were once more rolling on our way towards the capital. We arrived after dark, and Westover

went to dine with me at my hotel. The people of the house, with the usual care and promptitude of hotel keepers, suffered the dinner to be placed on the table, and half eaten, before they informed me that the old French lady whom I had seen on the day of my arrival, had been three times there to inquire for me.

“News, news, certainly,” cried Westover. “Bring me a sheet of paper, waiter. We will soon have Jeanette with us;” and writing a hurried note to the good old dame, he sent it off by a porter to his grandfather’s house. An hour, however, elapsed without intelligence, and then the same waiter appeared, saying, with a half-suppressed grin, “She is here again, [sir, asking if you have returned.”

“Show her in,” I said impatiently, “show her in directly.”

The man retired with some surprise, I believe, at my anxiety to see an ugly old woman, and certainly he did not hurry himself, for full

five minutes passed before Jeanette was in the room, and the eagerness of her face showed when she entered that the delay had not been on her part.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONFESSION.

“Get your hat, get your hat, Louis,” exclaimed Jeanette, rubbing her little hands, “and come away directly, or it will be too late. He will tell all, he will tell all; but he has been in a dying state since this morning. His speech seems failing, so make haste, make haste—he will tell all as soon as he sees you, he says, if you will but forgive him.”

I darted to the side-board and took my hat. Westover started up at the same moment, exclaiming in French, “May I go with you?”

“Yes, yes,” cried Jeanette, “come with

him, come with him ; the more the better ; every one is a witness, and that is something."

We darted down the stairs and away. How we got through the streets, I do not know, but we all hurried separately through the crowds, running against half-a-dozen people, and getting hearty benedictions for our pains. I arrived first at the apothecary's shop, and saw at a glance as I entered, the villain himself deliberately packing up something at the counter. He looked at me with a cold, sneering expression, but said nothing, and without asking any questions, I ran up the stairs at once, to the miserable room of the Marquis de Carcassonne. I opened the door unceremoniously, and went in.

The sight was one full of awful solemnity—at least to me, who had never seen any one die, except by a sudden and violent death, or by a gentle, yet quick transition from the life of this world to the life of another.

On the wretched pallet-bed, without a rag

of curtain round it, lay the ghastly figure of the dying man. All living color had passed from his face; the swollen, bloated appearance, too, was gone. The features were sharpened and pinched; the eyes sunk; the temples collapsed; the white hair, wild and ragged. One ashy-hand was stretched over the bed-clothes, holding a crucifix which lay upon his breast, and his eyes, which seemed glassy and almost immoveable, were directed to the symbol of salvation.

On the table stood a large wax taper, and between the table and the bed stood the old priest, Father Noailles, who had come in at the end of my last interview with the Marquis. His head was slightly bent, as if watching the face of the dying man, while a younger man, with a white robe on, stood at the other side of the bed, holding a small, chased silver vessel in his hands.

There was a dead silence in the room when I entered; but at the sound of my steps the priest turned round, and exclaimed, as soon as he saw

me, "He is here, he is here! Henri de Carcassonne, he has come to you at length!"

The eyes of the dying man turned faint and feebly towards me, and the priest advanced a step, and grasped my hand with a tight and eager pressure.

"Forgive him," he said, "tell him you forgive him!—if you be a man, if you be a christian—tell him you forgive him!"

I paused with my eyes fixed upon the face of the Marquis, and some feeling of compassion entered into my heart. But I could not speak the words he wanted to draw from me—I could not pronounce forgiveness to the murderer of my father. I remained silent, while the priest repeated, more than once, "Forgive him, oh forgive him, and let him part in peace!" I heard the steps of Westover and Jeanette approaching, and I said, at length, "Has he done justice to my fathers' memory? Will he—can he now do justice to it?"

The priest drew back from me and let go my hand. "Young man," he said, in a solemn and reproving tone, "make no bargain with God! Trifle not with the command of your Saviour. It is Christ who bids you to forgive, if you would be forgiven, to love your enemies, to pray for those who hate you. Forgive him! On your soul's salvation, I call upon you to pronounce your forgiveness of that wretched, dying old man, while the words can still reach his ear, and console him at this last, dark, terrible moment; forgive him, I say!"

"Speak, de Lacy, speak," said the voice of Westover, "for God's sake tell him you forgive him!"

At the same moment the hand of the dying man made a feeble movement on the cross as if he would have raised it, and an expression of imploring anxiety came into his fading eyes that touched me. I took a step forward to the side of the bed, and said, "Marquis de Carcassonne,

I do forgive you, and I pray that God Almighty, for his Son's sake, may forgive you also !”

The light of joy and relief came for an instant into the old man's eyes, but faded away instantly ; and I thought that he was a corpse.

“Stand back !” said Father Noailles, with inconceivable energy, and placing himself right before the dying man, and clasping his hands together, he swung them up and down as if he had a censer in them ; whether it was to rouse his attention or not, I cannot tell—and then he exclaimed aloud, “If any fiend prevents your utterance, I command him hence, in the name of the blessed Trinity—of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

“Henri de Carcassonne, I adjure you, as you hope for pardon and life eternal, answer me before these present—is all you have told me concerning the death of the Count de Lacy true?—and do you fully and freely consent to my making it public, without any reservation on the

plea of confession? If so, say yes, or die in your sins !”

There was something inexpressibly grand and awful in his look, his tone, his manner ; but something more awful was to come.

As we may suppose one would rise from the dead, the Marquis de Carcassonne suddenly raised himself in the bed, and in a clear distinct tone replied—“It is true, so help me God—I do consent.”

The last word rattled in his throat. The effort was over. It was the flash of the expiring lamp, and the words were hardly uttered, when he fell over on his side, with a ghastly swimming of his eyes.

“It is done !” said Father Noailles, solemnly, and raising the poor wretch’s head he put it on the pillow. There was now a fixed stare, a meaningless, vacant look in those glassy orbs, the moment before turned upon the confessor, which showed that “it was done” indeed. The

next instant the jaw dropped, and we stood in silence round a corpse.

I thanked God at that moment that I had pronounced the words of forgiveness ; and I stood by with Westover and Jeanette, while Father Noailles, and the young man who was with him, sprinkled some holy-water on the dead man's face, and performed one or two little offices according to the customs of France and the Roman Catholic Church. I would not have interrupted by a word for the world ; but when the priest had done, and turned towards us with a deep sigh, I advanced and took his hand, saying, " I thank you, sir, most sincerely, for having led me to cast away the evil passion in my heart, and show some charity at last ; I rejoice that I have done it, whatever be the confession that this man has made."

" We must forgive, Monsieur de Lacy," replied Father Noailles, mildly, " or how can we expect Christ to mediate for us. I have now to

tell you, that this poor man acknowledged to me this morning, that your father had been accused unjustly ; that the letters which had been brought forward at his trial were indeed forged, as many suspected, and that the Count died an innocent and injured man. I took his words down, and he signed them as best he could, giving me full permission to place the statement in your hands. There was no one present but ourselves, however, and a confessor must be very cautious. It was therefore absolutely necessary that I should obtain his consent to the publication of the statement in the presence of witnesses. Here it is. It is brief, but sufficient for all purposes. He was not in a state to give full details, but there is no point unnoticed which can tend to clear the memory of your father."

"Join me at my lodgings in half-an-hour," said Westover, quietly speaking over my shoulder. "I have business which calls me away just now." I simply nodded assent ; for my whole thoughts

were occupied for a time with the subject before me, and turning to the priest, I said, "I presume, Monsieur de Noailles, that this precious document will be made over to me?"

"Beyond all doubt, Monsieur de Lacy," he said, "to you it properly belongs, but I must request you to allow me to take an attested copy of it, and must beg all here present to join in a certificate that this unhappy man authorized me fully to make the statement public."

"That we will all willingly do," I replied. "Perhaps you had better draw up the paper you require, yourself."

That he declined to do, however, and with a pen and ink and paper, which had remained upon the table since the morning, I quickly wrote an attestation of the fact that Henri, Marquis de Carcassonne, had, in the presence of the subscribers, fully authorized the Reverend Père Noailles to make known and publish all the facts which he had stated on his death-bed, in regard

to the trial and execution of the late Count Louis de Lacy, as matters communicated to him, freely, and for the relief of his conscience, and not in the form of penitential confession, or under the seal of secrecy.

“I undertake,” I said, when I had signed the paper myself, and Jeanette and the young assistant had signed it also, “that Captain Westover, who has been obliged to leave us on business, shall put his name to it likewise. Now, Monsieur de Noailles, will you permit me to look at that paper? We will make a copy of it immediately; but, of course, my anxiety to see the contents is great.”

The old man placed the paper in my hands, and seated at the table beside him, I read as follows :—

“I, Henri, Marquis de Carcassonne, do hereby acknowledge and certify, that by various false and iniquitous charges, set on foot for objects and motives of my own, I did, many years ago,

to wit in the year of our Lord 178—, cause and procure Louis, Count de Lacy, to be brought to trial for treason and dereliction of duty in the government of the possessions of the French crown in the East Indies: that I have every reason to believe the said Count de Lacy to have been totally and entirely innocent of the crimes thus laid to his charge; and moreover, that two letters produced in court at the trial of the said count, and purporting to be parts of a correspondence between himself and Sir E. C—— were, to my certain knowledge, and with my cognizance, forged; not by myself, but a certain Giraud, apothecary to the household of the said count, for the purpose of procuring his condemnation; and that I prompted and encouraged the said Giraud to counterfeit the count's hand, and forge the above-mentioned documents, inasmuch as I found that the charges could not be sustained without them, and I feared the vengeance of the said Count de Lacy, if acquitted, on account of cer-

tain previous passages between us. I bitterly regret and repent of the crime I thus committed in procuring the death of an innocent man ; and now finding that it pleases God to take me from this world, and that I have not many hours to live, I make this acknowledgment and confession solely to do justice to the memory of the said Count de Lacy, and to make atonement, as far as is in my power, for the evil and misery I have brought upon him and his family, trusting that God will accept my tardy repentance, through the merits of my Saviour Christ, I have hereunto, in my perfect senses, and with full knowledge and recollection of all the facts, set my hand, in witness of the truth of all the particulars contained herein, the above having been previously read over by me, in presence of the Reverend Père de Noailles, having been taken down by him from my own lips.”

It seemed as if a mountain had been removed from my breast. I thought not of any advantages

which might result to myself. I carried not my thoughts at all into the future. My father's memory was cleared. His honour, his fair name was re-established. No crime now blackened the annals of my race, and when I turned and looked at the corpse of his murderer, I said with a free heart, and a sincere spirit, "May God forgive you, unhappy man!"

Poor Jeanette, who was by my side, and had been weeping a good deal during all these transactions, took me by the hand, saying joyfully—

"All will go well now, Louis—all will go well. More depends upon that paper than you know. Keep it safe, keep it safe, and all will go well."

It was necessary, however, in the first instance, to give a copy to Monsieur de Noailles, and when that was done, some further conversation ensued between us, in regard to the funeral of the Marquis de Carcassonne. I found that he had few, if any friends in London; for long pre-

vious to his illness, he had been suspected by the principal emigrants in England of being a spy in the pay of the existing French government.

“I shall be willing to bear the expense,” I said, “if I can get any one to superintend the management.”

“From what I know,” replied Monsieur de Noailles, “I think that both the expense and trouble should fall upon the man below stairs. I have reason to believe, that for the last year, during which the marquis has been in feeble health, Giraud has both ill-treated and plundered him, to a very great extent. The man is a hardened sinner, a scoffer, and an atheist; but the facts revealed in that document may, perhaps, frighten him into doing what is right, and I see no reason why you should be called upon, Monsieur de Lacy, to pay for that which he himself, I’m sure, is bound to do.”

I agreed perfectly in this view of the case; but we found ourselves deceived.

On descending to the shop, there was nobody in it but the boy whom I had seen there once before. He told us that Monsieur Giraud had called a hackney coach, and had gone away in it, with three trunks. He never returned, and I conclude that, alarmed at the revelations likely to be made by the Marquis de Carcassonne in his dying moments, he fled from England, and died somewhere in obscurity. The boy told us that, before he went, he had cursed the old fool upstairs, and had said, that as he seemed determined to die with a cow's tail in his hand, he should absent himself for a day or two, as he did not like such mummeries.

This afforded sufficient indication of his intention to induce me to request Monsieur de Noailles to make all the arrangements of the funeral in my name, and after having obtained his promise to that effect, and given him my address at Blackheath, I took my departure.

Jeanette went upon her way to Berkeley-

square, while I hurried on toward the lodgings of Westover, the hour of meeting which he had named having long passed.

I found a chariot, with flaming lamps, at his door, and was admitted immediately by a servant in livery, who seemed to be waiting in the hall ; but before I could mount the staircase, I was met by Westover himself, coming down with his hat on.

“Come with me, Louis,” he said ; “come with me. Thank God for this night’s work.”

“Where are you going to take me?” I asked.

“Never mind at present,” he answered, “to a house where you have never been.”

My heart beat with very strange sensations ; but I followed him to the carriage, and got in with him. When the door was closed, the servant touched his hat, enquiringly, and Westover said, “Home.”

It was the only word he spoke during the drive, which was short enough.

At length, the carriage drew up at the door of a large house, a thundering knock resounded through the square, and we both got out and entered a hall, in which several powdered servants were standing. Westover passed them all, without a word, and I followed. We went up a magnificent staircase, lined with old portraits, till my companion paused suddenly, laying his hand upon the lock of a door upon the first floor.

“Go in, Louis,” he said, in a low voice, “go in.”

“Will you not come in to introduce me?” I said.

“Not for the world,” he answered; “go in, Louis,” and he opened the door for me to pass.

The next moment, I found myself in a large drawing-room but faintly lighted; but there was a smaller one beyond, with a better light, and seated on a sofa there, I beheld a lady, with her handkerchief lying on the table beside her, and her eyes buried in her hands. The opening door

made her look up, and I saw the beautiful but faded face of Lady Catherine covered with tears. The moment she beheld me, she sprang up from the sofa, ran forward, cast her arms round my neck, and I heard the words—"My son, my son!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE COLOPHON.

I MUST not pause to describe emotions, nor can I, indeed, narrate regularly or distinctly all that occurred during the next half hour. I had found a parent—a mother. Oh, how dear, how charming that name. Those who have gone on from childhood to manhood, under a loved mother's eye, and have only parted with her at the threshold of that gate which we must all pass, can form no idea of the sensations experienced by one who has never known a mother's care, when he hears the very word mentioned—the longing, the yearning, the never-to-be-satisfied

desire to see the face, to hear the voice, to press the lips of her who gave us birth.

I had found a mother, and I sat beside her, with her hand clasped in mine, her head leaning on my shoulder, her eyes turned toward my face, speaking short words of love, often silent; but with a silence full of affection. For that half hour there were no explanations, no connected conversation. All was wild and strong emotion, the first overflowings of love between parent and child after a separation of twenty years.

We might have gone on much longer in the same way; but then there came a light knock at the door. It opened, and Westover's voice said, "May I come in?"

"Oh yes; come in, come in, Charles," said my mother. "Come in, my second son—my noble, my generous boy. I should not be half happy if you did not share in the joy you have aided to bring about."

Westover entered, and sat down by us, say-

ing, with a smile, while he shook me warmly by the hand—

“Now, Louis, you know all.”

“No, no ; he does not,” said my mother. “He knows nothing, Charles, but that his father’s name is clear, and that he has found his mother. I must tell him as best I can ; but I am afraid I shall be very confused.”

“I will help you, dear aunt,” said Westover. “It is right that he should know how it is he has been so long deprived of a mother’s care, and I am sure that in explaining, you will explain all gently.”

“Fear not, Charles ; fear not,” said Lady Catherine. “Though I have undergone much that was hard to bear, yet all is forgiven now in the joy of recovering my son. Let me see how I can best tell my story—I must begin far back.

“Some seven or eight and twenty years ago, I was a gay, wild girl, Louis, in the fashionable world of London. I had a fond and affectionate

mother, who spoiled me, perhaps ; a sister, next in age to myself ; and a dear brother—Charles Westover's father. There was a younger sister, too. All these were gay, light-hearted, and easy in disposition, like myself. But my father was made of somewhat sterner materials. You have seen him ; you know him ; and I need say little more, except that then he was moving a good deal in political life, and he had found it perhaps necessary to adopt a rigidity of principle, and a stern inflexibility of resolution, which has always kept his name high and pure in the world, but has not made one unfortunate child very happy.

“ About that time, my mother died, and I was left much to my own guidance, as the eldest of the family, and I met in society a young French nobleman, the Count de Lacy, who was then Secretary of Legation here. He was wealthy, had served in the army with distinction, and my father was fond of him, often inviting him to his house, and I have sat with him here, where now

we sit, a hundred times, receiving feelings which I little knew were creeping into my breast. At length he told me he loved me, and he very soon found out that I loved him. He expressed fears, however, that our affection would meet with opposition on my father's part, and assured me that he would not have ventured to breathe his love, till he had made more progress in the earl's regard, if he had not been suddenly recalled to France, as well as the ambassador. It was necessary, however, that my father should be immediately informed of our wishes, and De Lacy went to him for that purpose. He received a peremptory and immediate refusal. My father said that he esteemed and liked the Count de Lacy, but his daughter should never marry a foreigner, and a Roman Catholic.

“ We both knew that my father's resolutions were unchangeable, and those resolutions were expressed very harshly to me, who had never been accustomed to hear an unkind word from

any one. They engendered feelings which they ought not to have produced ; feelings almost of anger ; something more than disappointment—a spirit of resistance. I felt that I never could love any one but De Lacy ; that I should be miserable when he was gone ; that I could only be happy as his wife. We found means to see each other. Our first object was only to say farewell ; but in a moment of rash passion, he asked me to fly with him, and I fled. In everything he behaved with the utmost tenderness, delicacy, and honor. We reached Paris—unpursued, as I afterwards found, and were immediately married by good Father Bonneville, who had been the chaplain to the embassy ; and then by a Protestant clergyman.

“ I wrote to my father immediately, begging forgiveness ; but my letter was returned unopened, and I found that my father had given strict orders in his family that my name should be never mentioned to him ; that if ever I was

enquired for by others, the reply should be simply that I was abroad, and that no notice whatsoever should be taken, in public or in private, of my being the wife of the Count de Lacy. One is soon forgotten in a great world like this, Louis. There was some little rumour and gossiping when I first went away, but my father's perfect calmness and reserve, his appearance of utter indifference, and easy bearing, soon quelled all idle talk, and, except by my brother and my sisters, I was soon lost to remembrance. I had three children, of whom you were the second, Louis. My other lost darlings were girls. One died in the East, where De Lacy was appointed to a high command. The other died a day before her father.

“I cannot dwell upon that terrible time. My senses left me for several weeks, and when I awoke to a consciousness of my situation, I found myself a widow, nearly penniless, stripped of all the fine estates which my husband had possessed,

with one dear boy, between four and five years old, fatherless, and marked out by the terrible curse of a black stain upon his father's name.

“ Rank, station, fortune, love, hope, were all gone. The world seemed a blank void to me, and the waking from that frenzied sleep, like the recovery of a half-drowned man, was far more terrible than the death-like state which had preceded. I found, however, that besides good Father Bonneville, who had flown to me immediately, there was an English gentleman in the house, and as soon as I could bear it, I was told that he had been sent to me with a message from my father. When I could see him, I found that he was a stiff, dry, old man ; but not altogether unkind, and he did not venture to give me the message he was charged to deliver for two or three days. He then, however, told me that he had a proposal to make to me, which had been reduced to writing in my father's own hand. It was this—’

She paused again, unable to proceed, and Westover interposed, saying—

“ Let me tell him, my dear aunt.”

“ The case was this, Louis. My grandfather had watched anxiously the proceedings against your father, and when he found him condemned and executed, his whole estates confiscated, and his very name attainted, he sent over to offer my aunt Catherine a refuge in her former home. But it was only for herself,” he added, in a slow and sorrowful tone. “ He exacted that you should be left behind in France ; that she should resume her maiden name ; that you should be brought up in utter ignorance of your connection with his family, and, as far as possible, in ignorance also of your father’s history.”

“ It was a hard measure,” I said, somewhat bitterly ; but Westover went on.

“ On these conditions, he promised to provide for you amply, to pay for your support and education during youth, and to settle a sufficient

property upon you at his death. The reason he assigned for these harsh measures—as you will call them—was, that his name had come down unstained for many generations, and that he would never admit or acknowledge any connection with a family which had the taint of treason upon it.”

“ At first,” said my mother, taking up the tale again, “ I rejected the proposal with horror, and declared that nothing would induce me to part with my child. But the good gentleman who had been sent to me, urged strongly that by my presence and persuasions, I might induce my father to mitigate somewhat of his severity. He did not know his inflexible nature ; and before I yielded, I attempted by letter to move my father. I represented humbly, that although condemned by a corrupt court, my poor husband was certainly innocent—that I knew everything that passed between him and the British officers—that the letters produced were forgeries ;

and that the time would come when de Lacy's name would stand out pure and clear. All I could obtain was contained in the following words of his reply:—‘ If the time should ever come which you anticipate, and when your late husband's character shall be fully justified, I will acknowledge you as his wife with pride, and receive your son as one of my own race. But until that time, I will never see him. You must never meet him voluntarily; and I beg it to be remembered, that if, by a want of good faith, or even an indiscretion on your part, he is made acquainted with his connection with myself, or is brought to England under any false expectations from me, I will immediately stop the allowance that I propose to make him, and strike his name out of my will.’

“ At first, this seemed to me but little gained; but both the English gentleman who had remained with me, and Father Bonneville, thought that it was much. They represented to

me that opinion was already changing in France with regard to my husband's case: that multitudes asserted his innocence and deplored his fate; and that the time must soon come when he would be fully justified. My own hopes, and convictions seconded their arguments, and I resolved, at length, to submit. Beggary and starvation were before me, Louis; not only for myself, but for you. I was bribed, in short, by the hope of your happiness, to sacrifice all a mother's enjoyments and expectations. Father Bonneville undertook the task of educating you: my maid, Jeanette, agreed to go with him to his little cure, and watch over you like a mother; and with a bitterness, worse than that of death, I parted from you, and returned to England. Father Bonneville and Jeanette both solemnly bound themselves to the secrecy required—and well did they keep their word. God's will brought you to England—no act of mine—and by a blessed chance you became acquainted with

your cousin Charles, who has been to me, in my long widowhood and privation, the greatest comfort and consolation.”

“ But how did you know, Charles,” I enquired, “ so much of my fate and history, if the subject was forbidden in my grandfather’s house ?”

“ The prohibition was not well kept towards me, at all events,” replied Westover. “ My father told me the whole story long ago. My aunt Maude, whom you have seen, talked of it frequently. My grandfather himself even, of late years—when he found out that I knew it—mentioned the matter once or twice himself. I am a great favorite of his, and when I discovered that you were in England, and perceived what sort of a person you were, I used to dash at the subject with him often ; for with these stern old gentlemen, Louis, there is nothing like a little careless, rattling independence. Never do anything that is wrong towards them—never be insolent or

impertinent ; but go gaily on your own way, and they learn very soon to take it as a matter of course. Every one helped me, too, I must say ; for we would have done any thing in the world to comfort dear aunt Kate. It was with this purpose that I persuaded her to go down to Blackheath on the day of the review, not intending that she should know who you were till afterwards ; but just that she might see you, and learn that she had seen her son. But I even persuaded the earl himself to come and meet you at dinner ; and he was very much pleased with you there, especially when he found that you were perfectly ignorant of your own history. The fact of your having become a Protestant, increased his good feeling towards you ; and he began to take a good deal of interest in you ; so that I doubt not, in the least, we should have got round his lordship in the end, even if we had not obtained this important proof of your father's innocence. As soon as he heard the facts, how-

ever, and I assured him that there could be no possible doubt, he consented at once to my bringing you here: said that the objections were at an end; that the conditions were fulfilled; and he was quite ready to acknowledge you as his grandson. In fact, Louis, he only wished for a good excuse to abandon his stern determination, and he caught at it eagerly enough."

"Shall I not see him?" I asked.

"Not to-night, I think," replied Westover. "He was obliged to go to the House," he said, "and was gone before you arrived. The fact is, he hates what he calls scenes; and fearing there might be one here, he went away. Take my advice, therefore, and when you see him to-morrow, just shake him by the hand as quietly as if you had been his grandson all your life, and had just come back from Buxton. He will then take the initiative himself, and make all the arrangements that are necessary."

"But your father, Westover?" I said.

“ Alas! we have lost him,” replied my mother. “ But we have no second title in our family, Louis, and therefore Charles is merely Captain Westover. But you have some explanations to give, I think he told me.”

“ They will be better given to-morrow, dear aunt,” said Westover. “ Let us finish one volume of the book first. Jeanette has just been telling me, Louis, that you have got the precious document signed by the Marquis de Carcassonne’s own hand. Show it to her—show it to her. It will do her good to see it.”

My mother read it with eyes blinded by tears, and then pressed it to her lips. “ Thank God; thank God!” she said. “ I cannot help sometimes thinking, Louis, that the dead can see us, and if so, it must give even greater joy to the spirit of your father in glory to see his name thus justified by the efforts of his son.”

I disclaimed much of the credit she attributed to me, and acknowledged that the principal honor was due to good Jeanette.

Jeanette was then called in, and embraced us all round. Kissing Charles Westover on each side of the face, and me twice on each side, calling him an *excellent garçon*, and me her *cher Louis*, and then danced for a minute for very joy, then ran out of the room to weep, from the same cause.

We protracted our sitting until nearly midnight, and I retired with a heart lightened of its heaviest load. The next morning I went, as had been arranged by Westover, to call upon my grandfather at his breakfast hour. I found him alone; for my mother had not come down to breakfast for years; but he received me very kindly, gave me his whole hand, and made me sit down to breakfast with him. For the first five minutes he called me Monsieur de Lacy; but it very soon got to Louis, and he talked of the news of the day, and of Charles Westover, and of the state of his health, and of his own anxiety to prevent his from joining his regiment again, while that ball was in his chest.

I followed his lead, and replied, "I dare say, sir, you might find means, if you wished it."

He shook his head, saying, "I don't think it; boys and girls are all obstinate. What means?"

"If you were to persuade some fair lady to ask him, sir," I said, "he would never refuse her."

"Ha! what, mean you Miss ——?"

"I really do not know who the lady is," I answered; "but I dare say your lordship is well aware."

"Oh, yes, I know quite well. He has been engaged to Miss —— two years. I wonder why they have not married before now."

"I really cannot tell," I answered; "but perhaps they do not know that you would approve—or Westover may think that he has not sufficient to keep his position as your grandson."

"Aye, that old uncle of his, Westover," he said, "left his fortune charged with such a jointure

that nothing will come in from that till the old lady dies——”

He thought for a moment, and then added, “But all that will be speedily arranged. Why did he not speak to me about it himself?”

“I only speak myself by guess, my lord,” I answered; “and am conscious I am taking an unwarrantable liberty in mentioning the subject to you at all.”

“Not at all—not at all,” said the earl. “I am obliged to you; but I cannot be expected to think of all these things for everybody. He only told me that he intended to marry Miss ——; and I said very well, I have no objection; for she is a very good girl, and of a very old family, though poor—desperate poor. Go, and tell him, Louis, that if he likes to stay here and marry, I will make every arrangement to render him comfortable. Don’t let fortune stand in the way a moment. He shall be put at ease.”

I had a great inclination to say a good word

for myself ; but I forbore ; and as soon as I rose to go, the earl asked, in an ordinary tone, “ Have you seen your mother this morning ? ”

I replied, as nearly as I could in the same manner, “ that I had not yet ; ” and he rejoined, “ Well, go and see her before you go to Charles. You will find her in her dressing-room. You know where it is. ”

I had not the most distant idea. But I did not tell him so ; and merely bade him good morning.

Thus ended my first interview with the Earl of N——— as his acknowledged grandson.

Very few words more will suffice to close my little history. Charles Westover was delighted with the news I brought him, and readily agreed to retire upon half-pay, and to remain in England. He insisted upon knowing how it had been brought about, that I was sent with this message to him, and I gave him, half jestingly,

half seriously, an account of my interview with the earl.

“ I understand you, Louis ; I understand you,” he said, wringing my hand hard ; “ and I thank you from my very heart. Nothing on earth would have induced me to ask the earl for a penny. My mother’s jointure, of course, diminishes greatly the income that descended to me from my father, and perhaps some youthful imprudences may have diminished it still more. But the earl, I dare say, did not think of either. Now, all will go well ; for there is not a more generous man living, when he acts spontaneously. And so you really did not speak one word about your own engagement ? Well, that must be managed for you.”

“ No, no,” I replied. “ I will do it myself. I begin to understand his character, I think ; and trust I can manage it.”

However, when I came to talk with my mother on the subject, she was terrified at the very idea—a Frenchwoman—a Roman Catholic—the

daughter of a poor emigrant—she thought it would drive the earl mad.

I went down to see Mariette, nevertheless, that same day, rejoiced the heart of the Count de Salins with the news of my father's complete exculpation, and returned the next morning to London, taking Father Bonneville with me. But I took especial care not to say one word to any one of there being even a chance that the earl would disapprove of my choice. Some five or six days after, the earl wrote me a note to come over with Westover, and breakfast with him. We found him in the best humour; for some changes had taken place in the ministry which satisfied him; and towards the close of breakfast a servant announced that Mr. Holland was in the library.

“I will be with him directly,” said the earl; and when he had finished his cup of coffee, and read a paragraph in the newspaper, to show that he was in no hurry, he rose, saying, “Now, young men, come with me.”

We followed him to the library, where we found a tall, thin lawyer, with a shaggy head of hair, and two parchments spread out upon the table. A few words passed between the earl and his man of business, and then the former took up a pen, and signed the parchment at a spot pointed out.

“This, Charles,” he said, turning to my cousin, “is a deed settling the sum of five thousand per annum upon you, till my death puts you in possession of the family estates.”

“This, Louis,” he continued, turning to me with the pen still in his hand, “is a deed, settling two thousand per annum upon you for life; and you will find yourself further remembered in my will.”

He stooped to sign the parchment; but I laid my hand upon it, saying boldly, but in a comman-place tone, “Stop, my lord, if you please.”

“Why?” he exclaimed, looking up.

“First, because it is quite honor and pleasure enough to me to be your acknowledged grandson; and secondly, because I think it right to inform you, before you do what I could in no degree expect, that I am about to be married. The engagement was formed before I had the slightest idea that I was in any way related to you, otherwise I should certainly have consulted you before I entered into it.”

I could see by Westover's face that he thought I was going wrong; but I was not. The old man laughed, and said, “Well, boy, I have no objection to your marrying.”

“And any one I like?” I asked.

“And any one you like,” he answered. “I do not carry my superintendence beyond one generation. That is more than enough for any one.”

“Then, my dear, and noble lord,” I replied; “let me add, that the one I like is, I am sure, one you will like too; for she is as generous and

noble-minded as yourself—noble by birth and by character—a lady in every respect; and well fitted to be admitted into your family.”

“A Frenchwoman!” he said; “a Frenchwoman!”

I think it was a sort of instinct dictated my reply.

“One of my own countrywomen, my lord,” I answered; “the companion of my childhood—the friend of my youth. I know that you judge it best for every one to marry one of his own country. She is the daughter of the Count de Salins, and a nobler, or a purer name, is not to be found for five hundred years—not to be found in the pages of French history.”

“Well, well,” said the old earl, “I shall be very happy to see her;” and he signed the parchment, adding, “Bring her here, my good boy; bring her here. You will soon know if I like her. If I do I shall kiss her; and don’t you be jealous. If I do not, I shall give her three

fingers, and call her *Mademoiselle* ;” and he laughed gaily.

Two days afterwards, my mother and I brought up Mariette to visit the old earl. She was looking exquisitely lovely ; her eyes full of the light of hope and happiness, her face glowing with sweet emotions, and tremulous with feelings which added grace to all her graces. She leaned upon my mother’s arm as we entered the room where the old earl received us, and I could perceive, as he gazed at her, that he was surprised and struck with her extraordinary beauty. It was impossible to look upon that face and form and not be captivated. He rose from his chair at once, advanced and took her in his arms, and kissing her, with more tenderness than I ever saw him display, he said —

“ Welcome— welcome, my dear child. If Louis does not make you a good husband, I will strike him out of my will ; so see that you keep him in order.”

Westover and I were married on the same day. I have no reason to doubt that he was happy ; and of my own fate I am very sure.

By a decree of the Cour de Cassation, in the first year of the reign of Louis XVIII., by the grace of God, King of France, the sentence passed upon Louis, Comte de Lacy, was, after a great many *vus*, and *interrogés*, broken and annulled, the memory of the said Count *rehabilitée*, and his family restored to all their estates and honors. Nevertheless, we found a Count and Countess de Lacy still living in England in 1830, and there are strong and cogent reasons to believe that the very numerous family bearing that name had, by some means or another, sprung up around them.

THE END.

THOSE ROCKS.

THOSE ROCKS.

CHAPTER I.

TAKE a little bit of the world and paint it. Where shall it be—or, as the children say, what shall it be about?

On my life I do not know, and after all it does not much matter. Let us see if the reader can fix the scene and identify it for himself.

About forty or fifty years ago—some ten years more or less either way—for I will not be particular as to dates, lest I should fall into some mistake, and be brought before a high court of

criminal criticism—there was a spot in one of the loneliest nooks of the world, which well deserved a more distinguished and visible place. It was a little, solitary farm, consisting of some two hundred acres, with a red, ten-roomed, wooden house upon it, a long red barn, two or three sheds, and a well, with a tall ostrich-neck like apparatus above it for lifting out the water in one of the most primeval manners. The two hundred acres which lay around, were all compact and well together, occupying the bottom of a valley and stretching some way up the hill to right and left. The lower ground was fertile and rich, for a small stream ran through it, wending onward to a beautiful oblong lake, one end of which formed the boundary of the farm on that side, and round which the hills clustered, tumbling one over the other, as if they had come there in a hurry to look at their own rugged faces reflected from the water. The ground up the sides of the valley was naturally but little

inferior to that below, but it so happened that certain obstacles to cultivation presented themselves, in the shape of numerous large stones ; and, just in the midst of one of the finest fields, a large craggy mass of trap-rock burst through the soil, and went away towering higher and higher as it stretched out toward the lake.

It was a picturesque and beautiful object certainly, especially as it was fringed above with a crest of fine trees ; but its picturesque beauty was no compensation, in the eye of a farmer, for the obstruction which it afforded to its agricultural pursuits, more especially as the crumbling old trap came rattling down from time to time, and rolling onward as far as each mass thought proper down the descent, filled the field at the foot with new incumbrances, and might very well sweep away long lines of corn and other produce if any one attempted to cultivate up to the base.

In holes and crannies on the strange fantastic face of the rock, many a tree and shrub had

nested: the juniper, the savin, and the pine, some looking like men sheltering themselves under umbrellas, some like sentinels perched up there upon duty, some of the dark scrubby ones, like little Indian boys, sitting gathered up in fantastic shapes, watching what the white folks were doing in the valley below.

Now some twenty or thirty acres of land, immediately round the house, had been subject to man's use with considerable labour and skill, but still a good deal of industry was required to make it any thing like a large and flourishing farm. A little neglect, too, was apparent, both about the buildings and the grounds; for, in fact, the last tiller of the soil, who had been a skilful and well-doing farmer, had died about two years before, leaving the property to his widow, a lone woman, who very soon found, that whatever may be woman's rights, woman's comforts and advantages are very much bound up with those of man. After her husband's death she had been

eager to sell the farm ; for she speedily comprehended that she could not manage it well herself. But its loneliness, its remoteness from all towns, the nearest being about ten miles distant, and a certain evil reputation which it had, rendered a sale not so easy as might have been anticipated ; and it went on for two whole years, offered each month at a lower and a lower price, till at length some one was found to purchase it at about one half the sum originally demanded.

Probably the purchaser is now here upon the spot, for there is a lank, raw-boned man, perhaps more than fifty years of age, now standing at the little fence of the barn-yard, and gazing round him ; while a young blithesome-looking girl, plainly but very tidly dressed after the fashion of that day, stands with her hand leaning upon his arm, but not passed through it, in a very daughter-like attitude.

I have said that the male gazer was a lanky personage, but I have not dwelt upon his face,

though it was worthy of remark. Let me add, then, that his nose was sharp and pinched, with a slight tendency to the aquiline, somewhat reddish, too, by intimate acquaintance with the east wind. His eyes were grey, with a tendency to hazel, which left them no definite color; and the bushy eyebrows were still black, though the thin, straggling hair, which peeped from under his hat, was as white as snow. The jaws were lantern, the mouth abundantly wide, and the lower jaw massive and protuberant. He had a slight stoop in his shoulders, and his long limbs seemed as if they had, at some period, been dis-jointed, and then fastened together again with wires.

I have not mentioned his hat—oh, that hat! It is well worthy of a place in history—of natural history I mean; for it was indubitably a part of the man, and none of the extinct races—mastadon, mammoth, megatherium or saurians of any variety, ever possessed a hat like that.

In vain logicians and philosophers would prove that it could not possibly be a part of our worthy friend's own especial person, by showing that he purchased one at least once in every eighteen months, compounded out of a variety of materials, belonging both to the animal and vegetable kingdom. No matter for that, it is quite clear that, by an act of adoption or absorption, the hat became identified with the man; and, in less than three days after he had acquired a new one, it had assumed that peculiar shape, appearance, color and consistence which was perfectly symmetrical and, so to speak, sympathetic with his own frame, nature, and character.

Now this shape was very curious. No matter what form the hat or head-covering originally possessed, it assumed invariably, before three days were over, a turn up of the brim behind, and a corresponding depression (as naturalists would call it) of the crown. It seemed, in short, as if the two planes of the hat, the lower, into which

his head was thrust, and the upper, which shadowed the apex thereof, were suddenly seized with an inclination to form a triangle behind. The right-hand side brim, too, always acquired an ominous twist, flapping down over his ear, which being resisted by the inclination of the brim behind to turn up, (representing well the whig and democratic parties in some states) a species of virulent contention went on between them, which ultimately resulted in a crack or rent in the beaver.

Now the faction of naturalists who deny most absurdly that a hat is part of the individual man—which it is evident they do simply to favor the theory of development, although I myself see no more reason why man, in his progress toward perfection from the embryonic state, should not just as well develop a hat as develop the head that it covers, or the other extreme of his person either. . These people, I say, contend most unfairly that the tendency to the aristocratic up-

turning behind, was produced by the continual pressure of a very high coat-collar, that the corresponding depression of the crown was occasioned by a strange habit, which he had, of giving it a thump at that particular point each time he put it on, in order to guard its being blown off in windy weather; and that the flapping down of the right brim merely proceeded, or was induced, by his tugging at that particular member of the hat, when he was troubled either by the raging of the wind without, or the tumult of thought within.

It will be apparent, however, to all scientific persons, that this is no satisfactory explanation of the phenomena I have described. However, not to dwell longer upon merely one part or portion of the outer man, let me add, that the coat, which was always grey, was always, also long-waisted, although that was an age in the world's history when the waist of man, and woman, too, was usually between their shoulders. I give this

up to the advocates of the development theory, as there cannot be the slightest doubt in the mind of any one who examines scientifically that sort of museum called a ball-room, that the shape and figure of all existing male and female specimens, has greatly altered since the period of the Venus de Medici, and other fossils of that class. Let them class it as development or degradation as they will: that is a subject I treat upon here.

Now I will not pause to describe the dress of the young lady. Suffice it that she was a very pretty girl, and that is nearly the same thing in all ages.

But let me tell a little of the antecedents of her papa. He was as curious a heterodox sort of person as ever was seen, good at heart, kindly of disposition, generous in his nature, and as sanguine as a boy of sixteen, with a number of the peculiarities of his class and his country very strongly marked.

Now what were his class and his country? He had been originally a Connecticut school-master—not from the classic elm groves of Yale; for he had never witnessed the exquisite manipulations of Silliman, nor listened to the refined thoughtfulness of Woolsey, nor sucked in stars, like mother's milk, from Olmstead, nor dived into the mysteries of the soul with Porter. No, no—he had none of these advantages; but, nevertheless, he was in his way a very clever man, whose original acquirements of reading, writing, and arithmetic—which he owed entirely to a birch-rod and a red-haired usher, under a system of discipline long since exploded—had been greatly augmented in various ways, like rays proceeding from a centre, by his own eager exertions in struggling up the hill of knowledge. He had acquired many languages; he could quote Latin and Greek, and misquote Hebrew. He had all the English poets at his finger ends, the French poets—if there ever was such a thing

—in the palm of his hand, and a sprinkling of Italian poetry, too, which was accurate enough in the numbers of letters and syllables he pronounced, but not exactly in the mode of pronunciation. In fact, hearing him read an Italian poet would have been Greek to an Italian hearer.

Besides all this, he had a vast amount of desultory information, gathered up heaven only knows how. It seemed, in short, as if he had plundered a trunk-maker's or waste-paper shop, and stowed away in his brain all the fragments of arts and sciences he had collected.

But—there is always a but—in everything human. But it so happened that he was born the son of a Connecticut farmer, in a very lonely and remote district, far from the seats of learning and the haunts of men; and that copartment of the mind which is always the most retentive, set apart for early years and young associations, was filled with ideas of rural life, to which he always felt an earnest longing to return; it had

been his object for five and thirty years or more to amass by the labors of the ferule a sufficient sum to purchase himself a good farm, and retired from ploughing the intellect to plough the earth.

Love, however, came in the way, that intermeddling mar-plot of a passion. He fell in love with the prettiest little woman in all the village, and was far more happy in his love than poor Ichabod Crane, of Tarrytown renown. What though her gay companions laughed, what though they called him uncouth, ungainly? She loved him, and love lent her eyes to look below the surface. "She saw Othello's visage in his mind," and in due time became the wife of Amos Greer. Then came many of the drawbacks which follow the combination of poverty and love. Vain was she careful, thoughtful, economical; vainly did she resist the temptation to put on her Sunday gown on any day but Sunday; vainly did Amos labor double, a wife was an addition to his expenses; and then came babies, sicknesses and

deaths, and it is a well-known fact in natural history that nobody can eat or drink, or live or die, without paying for it. All Amos's previous savings hardly enabled him to make the two ends of the year meet, and for some time after his marriage, all further accumulation was out of the question.

But a change came over the vision, a sad one—he lost all his children but one. It was a blow upon him, but a harder still upon his poor wife. She sickened and died, and he was left alone with the girl now standing by him, who happily for herself, and unhappily for the village youth, inherited all her mother's beauty.

Nevertheless, misfortunes sometimes brings fortunes; from the period of his wife's death Amos Greer began to prosper. It was very strange, for she had a thousand times more practical good sense than he had. But it was an age and a country of speculation, and Amos Greer had always been of an enthusiastically

scheming turn. No disappointments had ever taught him better : from the first moment when he had peopled an imaginary school-room with five hundred imaginary scholars, and fancifully extended his back-parlour to a library to be filled with ten thousand visionary volumes, he had gone on dreaming in the same way, though he never had five and twenty scholars at one time. Mrs. Greer steadily opposed all rash speculations, but as soon as she was dead the curb was taken out of his mouth, and he ran off at a rate fit to break his neck. He devised a completely new mode of instruction, he thoroughly convinced himself that it was the most admirable that ever had been devised, and as enthusiasm will sometimes do, he thoroughly convinced a great number of others also. Scholars flocked in, a larger house became necessary, the Greer system was talked of, rumour became busy, the newspapers took it up, he had pupils sent from South Carolina and Louisiana ; he became a famous man.

His system proved successful—his pupils were clever, docile, and turned out well. Ushers applied to learn his system—his very oddities increased his renown; the grey coat and the large buttons did him a world of service, and the hat made him remarkable throughout the whole republic.

As he never increased his own expenses the result may be easily foreseen. Amos Greer accumulated a certain number of thousands of dollars, and that sum would have been larger and sooner gathered together had he not been the kindest-hearted man in the world. No man with a purse on one side has any right to have a heart on the other, and so he found to his cost. His accumulations were not so rapid as they ought to have been; he met with plenty of ingratitude—distaste for town-life grew strong upon him, yearnings after rural life became more and more urgent, and at length he bought the farm where he is now standing, with farm-imple-

ments, furniture and stock of all kinds—made his school over to another, and came up to take possession and enjoy.

Before he had set foot upon his farm he had determined upon doing a hundred thousand different things, most of which were utterly impracticable, and now he was gazing round and thinking where he should first begin to execute his impossibilities. After a moment or two he moved a few steps forward, with his daughter still walking by his side.

“Capital soil this, Mary dear,” he said, thrusting his stick deep down, “We’ll grow hemp here.”

“Hemp! what will you do with it, father,” asked Mary. But her father took no notice, and walked on.

“I wish those rocks were out of the way,” said Amos, at the end of the next ten steps; “I have a great mind to blow them up.”

“Why you would ruin the state in gun-

powder," said his daughter; "besides they are so pretty, you must let them stay a little for my sake, father."

"Well, well! we wont begin with that," said Mr. Greer.

Walking on and round about the farm they went for the next two hours, examining every field, and laying out (on his part at least) every square foot of ground for some new object to which nature had never destined it and man had never turned it. But still that great mass of trap rock met his eye wherever he looked, and still he repeated over and over again "I wish those rocks were out of the way!" They were his great stumbling-block, the obstacle to all his schemes and desires. There is no knowing how many things they prevented him from doing. They were as bad as an indiscreet friend.

Mary, however, stood up stoutly for them, she found a thousand beauties and a thousand

conveniences in them; they had so many snug nooks, they afforded such an excellent shelter to the whole farm from the north-east wind, they would keep the field from the snow-drifts, the sheep and the cattle could always find shelter there, they were in fact a natural wall to the whole property.

Still, however, her father shook his head, and “wished those rocks were away.”

But I must go on with my tale, otherwise it will all be taken up with one character. Let us suppose the family settled in their abode, all the little preparations made, every room turned inside out and the furniture re-arranged to suit the taste of Amos Greer—ay, and of Mary Greer also, for she liked to have her own little dwelling-place as nice, as tidy, and as snug as it was possible to make it, for never was any human being, real or imaginary, more orderly and cleanly in all her habits than herself. She had a nice, pure, bright mind, and she liked to see

every thing around reflecting its characters. Let us suppose the Sunday come, and all in order, the morning service of the church over, and Amos Greer seated at his books after dinner reading theology, to which he always gave up the Sabbath evenings ; while Mary was gone out to study theology in another volume, the great book of nature. Often did she study it there, for she had been taught from childhood “ to look from nature up to nature’s God,” to find homilies in green leaves, to hear the brooks sing hymns, and the birds chant anthems.

But Mary is not alone, there is a young man with her, a good-looking, well-dressed, intelligent young man, with eyes full of bright tenderness, and as he walks on by her side, sauntering quietly at the foot of those rocks, the reader may well ask what are they about ? Is Mary studying another leaf of the book of nature ? Are they not making love instead of studying theology ? No, reader, they are not. It is already made.

That young man was the head-usher of her father's school, and his great favorite, although very different in mind and character from himself, he was sober, pains-taking, and though at one period he had been a little too open-handed and lavish, yet after he became acquainted with Mary Greer he corrected that fault, and had quietly economised enough to buy her father's school when he left it. It was a tacitly understood thing between all parties, that he was to come up each Saturday night and spend his Sunday at the farm, and this was his first visit, so that Mary was showing him all the marvels of her new little world.

They are talking very quietly and very comfortably, and not making love at all, whatever you may think, young reader. It is sufficient for them that they are there side by side, and people may be feeling love without making it. They are talking of nature and nature's excellence and beauty. See, he stoops down and takes

up a stone which has rolled down from above. Now I warrant he is decanting learnedly upon that stone, for he is a great geologist and mineralogist—sciences but little known in that day. He must have discovered something very marvellous in that stone, for he is climbing up some eight or ten yards and examining the ground very carefully, and now he calls to Mary to come up too, and helps her up the ascent; and there they stand, and look, and talk, and then sit down and talk again.

But here comes Amos Greer himself, seeking a little fresh air before the evening closes, and his daughter and her lover go quietly down to meet him, and walk onward with him, young Harry Holden complimenting him with sincere warmth on the choice of his farm, and expressing an opinion that it is worth more than he paid for it.

Amos shook his head—"Ay, well enough, Harry, well enough—but I wish those rocks were out of the way."

Harry was as staunch a friend of the rocks as Mary had been, and earnestly endeavored to dissuade Mr. Greer from his wild notion of blasting them down and bringing green turf over them from the top.

Amos, however, was by this time a spoilt child of scheming. He had had his own way ever since his wife's death, and that way had been successful. There was no reason therefore why he should not have confidence in it, and therefore in answer to all arguments he merely replied—"I wish those rocks were away, however; they only serve to obstruct the view, to impede agriculture, to lessen the crops, and give the men upon the farm an excuse for not doing their duty—well, we shall see, we shall see." And certainly good Mr. Greer did put himself in the way of seeing—at least one side of the question—very soon after he entered upon the farm, for he sent to the village, or small town as it now deserves to be called, in which he had been a re-

sident so long, for a gentleman who, he thought, might give him good advice and directions as to the blowing down of the rocks, and the best means, in fact, of carrying out his various plans.

Now this gentleman was one who had appeared in the village about three months before, and was of that particular class, genus and variety, which is more frequently found in new countries than in old ones. Let us describe him, first on the outside, and then, as in all good books on natural history, give some account of the habits and customs of the animal. He was a man of fair complexion, florid countenance, flaxen hair—which implies something between green and salmon color—and might be forty years of age. He wore always, and on all occasions, a very bright blue satin cravat, varied only by a spot of gold-color when he was superlatively dressed, but still with an azure foundation, all the rest of his habiliments were brilliantly chosen, or chosen for their brilliancy. His gloves

were perfection, and lemon-colored ; his hat never seemed to be unbrushed, his coat was as bright as his cravat, and his boots were equal to the best Paris mirror. He called himself an engineer, and had a certain knowledge of geometry and mensuration, but his antecedents were very obscure, and although he talked with wonderful fluency, and had a long catalogue of friends in distant parts of the world, it was very natural that the people should trust him to a certain degree in one respect and doubt him in the other ; for the country was struggling upward at the time, and any man of information and ability was sure to find some portion of public confidence on points with which he was at all acquainted.

His appearance at the cottage or farm-house was a shock and a surprise to Mary Greer. She had met and was acquainted with him, and she neither liked his manners or his character. She had fancied that her father must see through him

as clearly as she did, and no mill stone was ever more clearly seen through than Mr. Clapworth. He was to her mind a mere adventurer, of small abilities, great pretensions, and very deficient means. He had contrived, however, to keep on the right side of the law, and as he was somewhat pugnacious withal, and stood upon character—God whit!—it was somewhat dangerous and expensive to speak one's mind of him.

However that might be, he appeared at the cottage with his chaise-wagon, and two companions armed with chains and instruments of mahogany and brass, one Thursday morning, and had a long private conference with Mr. Greer. All four went out to visit the rocks, and Mary Greer was left alone. She considered quietly what she was to do, and her situation was somewhat of a difficult one, for Mr. Clapworth had decidedly an eye for beauty, and had not failed, during her residence in the same town with himself, to make her comprehend that he thought her

the prettiest girl it contained. To settle the question would have been no great difficulty, for nature provides women with instincts which are exceedingly good substitutes for experience in matters of the heart; but the matter was complicated in the present instance by many other considerations, as the reader will soon see.

Amos Greer and his three companions returned just toward nightfall. Every thing was ready for them, a very comfortable supper prepared, sleeping accommodations for the guests all in order, and the horse well taken care of, fed and stabled. Mary had neglected no courtesy, and now seated at the same table with the rest, she trifled in silence with the meal she could not eat, and listened with all her ears.

She found to her consternation that every thing had been decided, that borings were to be made in the rock above, chambers to be excavated and filled with gunpowder, and the whole mass was to be blown down into the valley, if

nothing prevented. But that Mr. Clapworth declared to be impossible. A friend of his, a great European engineer, if one might believe his word, which was unquestionable—for he generally carried pistols—had moved immovable quantities of solid granite by the simplest process of explosion in the world. He would have blown off the top of Mont Blanc, and left the ancient giant of mountains without his night-cap, had there been any object to be obtained. Mr. Clapworth knew the whole process, was eager to put it in execution on a small scale at Mr. Greer's farm, promised unlimited success, and evidently looked upon the removal of many millions of tons of trap-rock, and smoothing the face of the country, as no more difficult an undertaking than shaving the chin of a ploughman preparatory to his Sunday's walk to church.

All this conversation made Mary very uneasy and she waited and hesitated for some time, but at length putting on a demure air, as if merely

on household cares intent, she asked her father to a conference of a few minutes in the adjoining room, which was in fact a little unused kitchen.

Mr. Greer started up and went with her. It was an unusual summons, and he was surprised, for Mary usually managed all domestic matters without reference to him. In the sublime of thought he felt himself quite as well quit of such sublunary things. He fancied on the present occasion that the best cow must be dead—or the tea exhausted, although they had not been there a fortnight—or that the pork was all out, or at the very worst that there were no more brooms.

Now, before I go further with this true history, let me inform the reader that this red house, which was built in the year of our Lord sixteen hundred and ninety-two, was a wooden house, and although the external walls were filled in with heaven knows what—for I was not at the biggin o't; the partitions were constructed not

of that which is considered in Old England the thinnest of all things, lath and plaster, but of lath without any plaster or simply wooden boards, fashioned on the one side in the shape of panels, but on the other perfectly plain.

Mary, Mary! you have made a great mistake! The uttermost part of the farm-yard, between the long-handled well and the brick oven, would not have been too secret a place for the communication you have to make; but now, trusting to your low, sweet voice, you are going to tell it all with nothing but a board or two between you and those who should not hear it, forgetting that your father's tongue, when at all excited, is merely like an articulate thunder-storm.

We will, however, leave the lady for a time, and walk back into the other room.

CHAPTER II.

Now Mr. Clapworth was a smart man. There were doubts in the great mind of the world as to whether he was by birth an Englishman or an American. His origin, like that of most great empires, was somewhat obscure; but he was a bold, dashing (all-promising) undertaker of every thing. There was nothing that he would not, could not, did not do, according to his own account of the matter; but there was one thing which he did not do—namely, pay his debts—for which the world differed in opinion from himself. His were circumstances, in short,

which rendered eves-dropping a virtue, and letter-peeping a very laudable employment.

Two minutes had hardly elapsed after Mary Greer had quitted the room, ere the ear of Mr. Clapworth was placed somewhat preposterously close to the key-hole. He had entertained doubts before as to her favoring his project, and as that project was of great importance to him in existing circumstances, he did not at all approve of the young lady's interference. The importance of the scheme may be judged when it is known that Mr. Clapworth, with the characteristic rapidity of his disposition, had contrived to owe four thousand dollars in the neighboring town, in the space of six months, and that he calculated upon getting five thousand dollars by the blowing down of "those rocks which were ever in the way of Amos Greer." He had ascertained that the worthy cidevant schoolmaster was worth ten thousand dollars at least, after paying in full for farm, furniture and stock ; and

as Amos was not a man of definite bargains, he had made up his mind to mulct him of one-half that amount, as the only means of keeping himself free of the clutches of the law.

He now, then, listened most attentively to all that was passing in the other room. The laugh was resonant, but at first he heard nothing distinctly, for Mary spoke in a low tone, though with much earnestness. Speedily, however, the voices were raised, and the changes upon Mr. Clapworth's countenance were very remarkable. Apprehension, amazement, and calculation were there but too distinctly visible. When he had heard as much as he thought fit, he walked quietly away to the kitchen, where the two worthy personages he had brought with him were quietly enjoying a pipe, and led one of them out into the yard with a somewhat mysterious air. The man was an Irishman, possessed of that peculiar shrewd twinkling eye which one often sees in not the very best class of our

Hibernian brethren. He called himself "a boy" of five-and-forty, and was square-built in frame, though somewhat short of stature, with a large projecting forehead, and ill-cut, though not large features. Mr. Clapworth knew him tolerably well, his capabilities and his conscientiousness; and he had not the slightest scruple in the world in communicating to him his plans, even when they comprised a certain degree of roguery. They spoke together earnestly for some minutes, and at last the Irishman exclaimed, "Good luck to you, my lad! It's just the self-same thing that we do every day in my country. It was for the same of this that they were going to send me across the waters to Botany, only I loved a land of liberty better; and I should like to know what this is a land of liberty for if one can't do such like things."

All this was very satisfactory to Mr. Clapworth, and he was peculiarly civil to Dan, as he called him; but there was a considerable amount

of consultation in regard to the third worthy, whose name was Ebenezer, and in regard to whom Mr. Clapworth entertained some doubts.

Dan only laughed at these same doubts, however, and when Mr. Clapworth remarked that Ebenezer was always very careful of his soul, Dan laughed still louder, asking, "What the devil would be the use of his soul if he could not put it in pawn for awhile when anything is to be got by it. Lave him to me, Mr. Clapworth. I'll take care of his soul for him ; and he shall do all that you tell him, notwithstanding."

While this was going on, Amos Greer and his daughter had brought their conference to an end, and the former had returned to the little parlor. Mary, however, was absent, and busily talking to one of the farm lads, who was seen to set out some five minutes afterward, and take way along the road toward the distant village.

No sooner did Mr. Clapworth and Mr. Greer encounter each other than the latter explained to

the former that he had altered his mind in regard to blowing down the rocks. He was sadly puzzled to assign a motive for this sudden change, being a man who would not tell a lie on any account; however, as it seemed necessary to say something upon the subject, he merely stated that his daughter was very fond of those rocks, and had shown him sufficient reason for not removing them.

“As you please, Mr. Greer,” exclaimed the self-called engineer, with a look of well-assumed surprise and mortification. “Nevertheless, it would have been a splendid work, and not so difficult to execute as you think.” He then proceeded to talk of mines, and chambers, and shafts, and fuses, calculated to an apparent nicety how many barrels of gunpowder would have been required, and tempted Amos sadly with the picture of a beautiful flat turf running from the water’s edge to the top of the hill. He ended, however, with a demand upon his companion’s purse as compensation for his loss of time and

trouble. He even made out a little bill comprising a great number of items, some of which Amos Greer had no notion of, and the whole of which were placed at a very high price.

Though astounded at the amount of the demand, Amos Greer paid it on the spot, not without a sullen look, it must be confessed, and a hard scratch at a bald place upon his temple. However, he invited Mr. Clapworth to remain with him till the next morning as the day was already somewhat far spent.

The invitation was readily accepted, and Mr. Clapworth was peculiarly delightful that evening. He had an inexhaustible fund of conversation, as well as an inexhaustible fund of impudence ; he could talk upon any subject and every subject, and no subject at all—and all equally well. He paid particular attention during the whole evening to Mary Greer—laughed, chatted, showed his fine teeth, rolled his fine eyes, displayed his fine person, and played with a rich gold chain,

which he wore round his neck, and on account of which it is probable some jeweller of New York or Philadelphia had suffered inconvenience. He flattered himself he was making great progress in the young lady's good graces, for Mary was gay and contented at the thought of having preserved her favorite rocks, but at heart she very little admired, and much doubted him.

Several times, indeed, during the course of the evening Mr. Clapworth retired to a conference with his men, whom he had banished from his first arrival to the kitchen, on pretence of their being afflicted with smoking propensities, which he knew were obnoxious to Mr. Greer ; and Mary remarked, when he returned from any of these little expeditions, his countenance wore a very peculiar expression—earnest, thoughtful, almost absent. He soon recovered himself, however, and was as blithe as a lark again.

Thus passed by the hours until bed-time ; and although Amos Greer was an early riser, he

had not opened his eyes on the succeeding morning when Mr. Clapworth knocked at his door and shouted, "Good morning, Mr. Greer, good morning! I am going, for I have a good deal of business to attend to in town!"

"Good morning!" grumbled Amos, half asleep, and he turned himself quietly round to enjoy that comfortable half-dozing state which suffers sleep to depart in peace, and prepares us well for the labors of the waking day. A few minutes after the roll of wheels was heard going away from the house, and then Mary's light step from her chamber-door, as she went down to superintend the business of the morning. Amos Greer remained for some five or ten minutes more comfortably in his bed, then rose and went down to a little room which he had appropriated to himself for the purposes of study, of the dimensions of seven foot by ten. He remained for nearly half an hour perfectly undisturbed; but then, as he was studying a deep trigonometrical calcula-

tion, and referring from time to time to a table of logarithms, he thought he heard a distant shriek ; but the mind of Amos Greer was far away, he quite forgot that he was not in the village where he had long kept school, and he said to himself “the Selectmen ought to stop the children from screaming in the street.”

How long he remained reading, and writing, and thinking, I really cannot tell, but he went on until he began to grow hungry ; and under the pressure of that first great necessity, he put his mouth to the partition, and shouted aloud, as was his wont, “ Mary, my love, are you not going to have breakfast to-day ? ”

He was answered in a moment by one of the women of the farm, who, although standing in too much awe of the ancient pedagogue to enter and disturb him uncalled for when he was studying, came in at the first word to inform him that Mary had gone out about the farm early in the morning, and had not yet returned.

“We can’t tell what is the matter, sir,” she added, in a tone of some surprise and alarm, “but she has never been so late in coming back since we were here.”

Amos Greer’s eyes travelled between the logarithms and the woman’s face as she spoke; but there was a look of so much unfeigned astonishment and apprehension, that he could not help sharing her terrors.

“Not come back,” he said; “not come back!” And at the same time he took down “*the hat*” from a peg, and sticking it boldly on his head, saying, “I will go out and seek for her;” and he repeated the same more than once, evidently a good deal confused by the unpleasant circumstances in which he was placed.

“We had better all go out together,” said the woman, “for there is no knowing what may have happened.”

Amos Greer shook his head with a look of much melancholy; but, however, the whole party

did set out, and searched far and near for Mary Greer in vain. Upon the path toward the rocks, and at the foot of the rocks themselves, two fragments of a woman's dress were found, not that there was any proof whatsoever, tangible at least to human eyes, that these fragments belonged to the dress of Mary Greer, but it was a strange sight to see them lying there at all; but it immediately flashed through the father's mind that he had seen his daughter in garments somewhat similar, while all the others, who used their eyesight with more active discretion, vowed and declared that those were parts of Miss Mary's dress.

Poor Amos Greer was now in a state of great perplexity and alarm. He was not accustomed to deal with any matters of great moment, nor fitted by nature to encounter dangers and perils with prompt exertion, but some one suggested that the whole range of rocks should be examined, lest the young lady should have fallen over at any

part, though this would not have accounted for finding a fragment of her dress upon the path.

The suggestion was followed, however, but nothing was discovered, and poor Amos Greer's agony became intense. She was the last, the cherished one, the image of her dear mother, the light and consolation of his way, the focus in which all rays of hope and expectation centered, and to think that she, too, should be snatched from him—that she, too, should go prematurely to the grave, while he was left to mourn the withering of all the flowers of life, was more than the poor man's heart could bear. Although there was no cause whatsoever to suppose that the rocks had any part in the catastrophe, yet his mind became possessed with the idea that they were in some way accessory to his daughter's loss, and he cursed them in very full and emphatic language, such as he had never used in his life before. He called them “those cursed rocks ;” he gave them up to every species of

condemnation, and he wished that they had been thrown down half a century before he became possessor of the farm.

“Had we not better send for the sheriff and raise all the people round, and have more thorough search?”

“Send for any one you like,” said Amos Greer, “but above all, send for young Harry Holden, who now teaches my school.”

There was no opportunity of executing this order, for, as they walked on in an irregular little party toward the house, who should they meet but Harry Holden himself, coming on at a great pace, for rumour had already communicated to him great cause for apprehension.

“Why, Harry, my dear boy, this is lucky indeed,” exclaimed Mr. Greer. “Have you heard what has befallen?—how soon it must have travelled!”

“I have heard very little, Mr. Greer,” said Harry Holden; “and I came solely on account

of a note I received from Mary last night, full of doubts and suspicions as to that man Clapworth, who was staying here. Why, my dear sir, he is as notorious a villain as any in the country, and suspected of deeds as bold as they were bad. The first thing is to pursue and take him. Depend upon it he has some share in this business.

“No, no, Harry, you are mistaken,” said Mr. Greer; “he was gone long before Mary was up, for I heard her go down, after he had driven away with his men. I should know my child’s footfall, I think, when it has been music to me through many a long, dreary year; and I would know it from ten thousand others.”

The young man fell into a momentary fit of musing; but he was not satisfied, and he said in a doubtful tone, “He did not pass me upon the road; and when I left the village he had not reached it; but something must soon be settled. Why he should injure Mary, or seek to injure

her, I cannot divine, unless he thinks she has frustrated his schemes for pillaging you. Then, heaven knows what he may have done, for he is a desperate villain, and, notwithstanding all his smoothness, is doubtless as revengeful as he is cunning. Good heaven! it is frightful to think of. Stay, Mr. Greer—let me think for a moment. You say some scraps of her dress were found at the foot of the rocks?”

“And on the path just below, Master Holden,” said one of the men.

“Then there must have been a struggle!” said Harry; “and they have carried her round that way to avoid the public road. Will you lend me a horse, Amos?”

“Oh! if he have laid an injurious hand upon my child,” exclaimed the father, his face becoming almost livid with the rage excited by the very thought; “the whole land between the oceans shall not be wide enough to hold him and me!”

“Will you lend me a horse?” repeated Harry Holden, eagerly.

“Take one—take one!” cried Amos; “but whither go you, lad? Let us hunt the wretch down together. Are you going for the sheriff?”

“No, no! Send some one for him. We will hunt together, Amos; but let us plan our hunting well. You, with the men go round under the rocks again; follow the pathway on below by the side of the lake till you come to the place where it is stopped by the crow-nest hill and turns in through the pass. I will gallop round at the back of the cliffs. Let the sheriff and his people be told to follow me. They cannot have got far if they are taking her away; and I will not lose sight of them till there are enough men about me to take them, should I once set eyes upon them.”

“Drive them back to me,” said Amos Greer, fiercely; “drive them back to me, boy. Let no man’s hand punish him but mine. I will back

at once, and we will block the mouth of the pass. I will wait there and watch. So drive him back to me."

Harry Holden ran off as if wings had sprung out of his feet, saddled a horse, and was away over the upland in a moment, while Amos Greer dispatched one man for the sheriff, and with the rest hurried back to the foot of the rocks. Keeping close to the side, often looking anxiously up, muttering now and then a word which no one distinctly heard, but still plodding onward, he followed the path along till it reached the verge of the lake, and thence wound onwards with only room for two persons to walk abreast. No sound, no sight, gave any indication of their being on the track of those they sought, till they came to a spot where the water of the lake had somewhat invaded the little path, and left it soft and muddy. There, several foot-marks were seen, and amongst them one small and delicate.

"That's Miss Mary's foot," said one of the

men ; and Amos Greer looked from it towards the lake with dark fear stealing over his heart. But the next instant the men exclaimed, " They go straight ahead," and the party with renewed hope, sped forward.

Amos Greer's eagerness would have induced him to deviate from the plan arranged, and go on, when they came to the break in the rocks through which the path turned to the right ; but one of the men pointed out that they might miss their object by so doing ; as the little footway branched into two or three separate tracks, with large masses of rock and some thick trees between.

Amos suffered himself to be dissuaded, and while the men stood round, so as to catch the first sight of any one coming down the ravine, he seated himself on a large mass of stone, and gazed down upon the water. It was one of those moments when present anguish nests itself back upon memory, and during the brief space he sat there,

all the sorrows and anxieties of the last twenty years came back to his recollection—the fate of the dear children who had climbed his knee, and died in his arms ; the long struggle with poverty; the loss of the wife of his early, his only love, whose head had been pillowed on his bosom in slumber and in death—all came back as if to compare themselves with the agony of the present hour and show that it was greater than all.

Hark ! there is a scream above, high on the top of the rocks ! It is his child's voice !

In an instant he was on his feet ; and before any could cry, “ Madness ! ” he rushed up the bold face of the crag.

There seemed no footing for a foot, no point where the fishing-hawk could perch ; but there was footing for a father's love. His head turned not giddy—nor eye, nor head, nor foot failed him. Onward he went. He reached the top ; and some of the men ran round to give him aid above.

One remained below to watch. The moment after Amos Greer had attained the summit, three or four figures were seen upon the very edge. The man below could behold a struggle, fierce, but short; and then a dark sprawling mass was cast into the air—struck a point of the rock projecting from the rest—bounded off, while a fearful shriek rent the air—and the next moment a mangled human form lay upon the path, with the feet falling into the water of the lake.

With a shudder the man went nearer. The face was turned up; but no one could have recognised the features. The dress, however—the smart waistcoat, soiled and bloody, the gold chain, the embroidered cravat, were those of Clapworth.

CONCLUSION.

When the men scrambled up to the top of the rocks the scene before them was a touching one. Fair Mary Greer was clasped in the arms of her

father. His hat had fallen off—his thin grey hair was streaming in the wind, and as he held her with his long arms pressed tight to his gaunt bosom, he lifted his eyes, streaming with tears, to heaven, crying—"My child, my child!"

At the same time, two stout men were seen some two or three hundred yards distant, running with all their might, while the horse of Mr. Greer, which had been ridden by Harry Holden, stood masterless hard by. But upon the grass near the animal lay Harry Holden himself, silent and motionless, and the men could see that Mary, while pressed to her father's breast, was pointing eagerly to the spot where her lover lay. The moment after Mr. Greer unclasped his arms, and he, his daughter, and the labourers all ran at once toward poor Harry. Before they reached him, however, they had the happiness to see him raise himself slightly upon his arm, and though his face was streaming with blood from a deep wound upon his head, yet life was not ex-

tinct, and that for the moment was enough. Mary knelt beside him and wiped his face, talked to him with words of love which might well waken a less affectionate heart than his to beat warmly again. There was no cold shyness, none of that mock modesty which shuts the lips against the sound of tenderness and passion. She poured out all that was in her breast, naturally, freely, frankly; and in a few minutes she was rewarded by seeing the light of intelligence beam up in the dim and dizzy eyes.

About half an hour more sufficed to enable him to rise and begin to walk toward the farm, and as the party went poor Mary's story was soon told, for it was a very brief one.

She had gone out in the morning to look after some of the affairs of the farm, and had walked some way along beneath the rocks toward the lake, when suddenly and much to her surprise Mr. Clapworth and his two men presented themselves. At first he had sought to lead her on by

fair words and persuasions, telling her that he had something of the utmost importance to communicate regarding her father. Mary prudently, however, refused to go farther, and then force was used, but still the pretence was kept up in order in some degree to still her cries and diminish her resistance—thus she was dragged along until they reached the lake and the narrow path between the rocks and the water, where to struggle at all would have been perilous in the extreme, and one man going before while another followed after, with Clapworth holding tight by the arm, she was dragged along, endeavouring to delay their progress as much as possible.

When they reached the rocky defile which I have mentioned she renewed her resistance, refused to go a step farther till she was informed of the object for which they were carrying her away. Clapworth then told the story which he had invented for the purpose of gaining her consent to an immediate marriage with himself,

assuring her with oaths and protestations, which were fearful in connection with their falsity, that her father's safety, nay, his very life, depended upon her immediate union with himself. He created some dim fears at first; but when he went on to assert that the wealth that Amos Greer possessed had been gained by the commission of a great crime, of which he, Clapworth, only possessed the secret, Mary's filial love and reverence rose up against the lie, and she laughed him to scorn. The man raved and swore, and called God to witness, and imprecated curses and death upon his head if he spoke falsely; but Mary's faith in her father was not to be shaken; and at length, enraged, the men dragged her, struggling and resisting, on, by the path which wound up to the top of the cliffs. They had not proceeded far along the level space above, however, when a horseman came in sight, and with a loud shriek, which caught her father's ears below, Mary burst away from the villain's grasp

and sprang toward the edge of the rocks, in the hope of finding some pathway down. One of his base companions struck poor Harry Holden from his horse, with a large stone but too well aimed, while Clapworth pursued the fugitive like lightning, with rage and disappointment in his look. She was almost within his grasp when the tall grim form of Amos Greer himself rose above the edge of the rock, and the reader already knows the result of the brief struggle that ensued.

Little more remains to be told, but that little is of some importance. When the small party reached the end of the valley in which the house stood, they were startled and surprised by finding that the wind was drifting down the course of the stream a thick cloud of pungent smoke, and the men running on soon perceived that the house itself was in flames, and the women who had been left there were screaming in the farm-yard. By great exertions the fire was extin-

guished before the whole buildings were consumed; and then began the questions, which soon elicited that Mr. Clapworth's two men had returned not long before the fire broke out, and upon the pretence of seeking for something their master had left behind, had entered and searched Amos Greer's own little room. What they took the women could not tell, but before they had been gone five minutes the whole of that part of the building was in a blaze. What became of them afterwards is not clearly known, for they made their escape for the time, and evaded all pursuit. A scantified looking person, however, of the name of Ebenezer, was shot by a tall Kentucky farmer some five years afterwards, for a brutal assault upon his daughter; and as to the other, those who have seen both declare that there was a strong resemblance between him and the well-known Dan Blackitt, who figures, I am told, somewhat conspicuously in the criminal annals of Georgia.

It was some months before poor Harry Holden recovered entirely from the severe blow he had received upon the head; and while the farm-house was repairing, Amos Greer returned to the little town, and taught in the school of his young friend. Every time the old man went up to the farm on the Saturday afternoons, he would sigh over the destruction of his property, and the loss of the money which the villains had carried off; and always he ended by pulling his hat by the right brim, and murmuring something about " 'Those rocks.' "

But Mary would throw her arms about his neck when she heard the words, and remind him that those rocks not only had afforded him safe footing to save his child, but contained, in the mass of almost pure copper which was actually bursting from one of the large crevices, wealth at least sufficient to repair all their losses.

This would set Amos Greer's imagination wandering among steam-engines, shafts, and

furnaces ; but by Harry Holden's good advice he refrained from pursuing his schemes with too great eagerness. A large quantity of copper was extracted but with little expense—sufficient to rebuild the farm-house, and to give his daughter a handsome dowry on her wedding-day ; but ultimately it was found that the vein grew less and less as the pick-axe and spade were plied, and that the copper was mingled farther on in the rock with other substances, which rendered the erection of expensive works unadvisable. Still, however, Amos Greer used to argue geologically on the winter evenings, that this stream of rich ore, which in some convulsion of nature had been forced in such great quantities through the hard trap-rock, must have some connection with a mightier mine below, and he used to amuse himself with speculations upon the subject for a considerable time, till another equally congenial occupation was afforded to his mind

by the instruction of his little grandchildren in the art and mystery of swimming paper boats upon the stream.

THE END.

JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA.

JUSTINIAN AND THEODORA.

CHAPTER I.

SKIES of transcendant loveliness hung over the city of Constantinople on an evening of September, 695. The first cool breezes of the autumn fanned the sea and poured gently through the streets, refreshing the ladies, and reinvigorating the hearts of men. The foliage in the imperial gardens and in the suburbs waved and fluttered in the wind, and only the tall ancient cypresses of old Byzantium remained still, in their dark and

solemn grandeur, like sentinels watching on the hill over the fate of the great city. Gradually, as the sun declined and approached the verge of the sky, a few light clouds gathered in the zenith. They were no more than as feathers torn from the plumage of some white bird and cast up into the sky; but like the changeful breast of the dove they varied every instant with the varying light. At first as pure and untinted as flakes of snow, they gave deeper intensity to the sapphire-blue of the sky, then caught the warm hue of love's own rose, and then burned like drops of molten gold overhead. That group of clouds was like the lighter thoughts of some great mind—at first but a shadowy film, a light passing fantasy relieving the intense depths of intellectual space—then assuming brighter colors from an accidental cause, and then burning for awhile in golden glory ere they pass away and are forgotten.

The streets of Constantinople were not

crowded: few either on horseback or on foot were seen in the Hippodrome; but over the glassy waters of the Bosphorus, a thousand light boats were skimming, all rosy with the evening light.

The eyes of two men in very different circumstances gazed upon the changes of the declining day. The one could see the whole—could cast his view over sky and land and sea and city, and revel in the magnificent variety of the scene and the hour. The other caught but one ray from all the splendor of the heavens, and knew, as it streaked the dungeon-floor, both by its direction and its color, that another day was gone, that evening was now, and night was coming. From the high windows of the imperial palace, between the Hippodrome and the church of St. Sophia, the eyes of Justinian the Second could either gaze down through terraced-gardens and ranges of exquisite statuary to the fair waters of the Propontis, or sweep to the right and left over all the gorgeous

edifices of the city and amidst the summits of the seven hills, while his cheek was fanned by the breeze of the summer sea before him.

In the dungeon of the prison called Lethe, whose ominous name bespoke the fate of all who entered there to rot and perish in oblivion, the eye of Leontius, the often victorious general of Constantine the Fourth, could catch no sight but stone-walls, and that one ray of light upon the floor; his burning lip drew no breath but the sultry air of that den of horror and solitude. Yet each was meditating at that moment upon the other.

The young Emperor, whose power had been so long abused by the cruelties and the extortions of a monk and eunuch—ill-chosen ministers and worse teachers—found symptoms of discontent and insurrection spreading through the land, and foreshadowing the approach of general rebellion. Principally in Greece, and in her isles especially, such indications had been seen, and he bethought

him of whom he could choose to undertake the rule of the Grecian districts, to suppress resistance and avert the danger. He leaned his handsome head upon his hand, as he reclined upon his couch of ivory and gold, and his mind rested upon Leontius.

“He was my father’s friend, counsellor and general,” he said; “and in all he was faithful and successful. He dared to oppose my will and that of my counsellors; but he has had a lesson severe enough to teach him that he whom he thought but a boy, can rule as a man.”

“He was once a noble lad,” thought Leontius; “and his father was ever my benefactor. I opposed him but for his own good, hoping that with better advisers, his heart might be reclaimed. But, alas, he is utterly corrupted, or he would not suffer me to perish here.”

Justinian called a slave to his side, mentioned a name, and added—“Bring him!”

The ray of light was fading away upon the dungeon-floor, when the heavy door opened, and Leontius was commanded to rise and present himself to the emperor.

“For death or life,” asked the captive, sternly.

“For life and high honor, if I judge aright,” replied a slave who had followed the jailor into the dungeon, and in a few minutes Leontius stood before the throne of his prince.

The manner of Justinian was cold and stern ; but his words were almost gracious. He told the captive that he was free ; that his sentence was remitted ; that he had once served well an imperial master ; and that having now been taught that the will of his lord was not to be opposed, he should have an opportunity of proving his faith and redeeming a past error. In a word, Leontius was informed that the government of Greece was in his hands ; and

clothed with a purple robe, he was led to his own house from the imperial presence, with a command to lose no time in speeding to his post.

Friends of other days came to visit him once more ; old familiar faces crowded round ; the ties of domestic tenderness were renewed. But a deep gloom hung upon Leontius—a calm, stern, silent load of thought, like the heavy, motionless cloud, and still breezeless, oppressive air which often precedes the earthquake. He seemed to have lost the power of rejoicing—even in his own liberation. He spoke not his feelings—to none he told the thoughts that were busy in his brain ; but he pressed the preparations for his departure, and with such success, that even the impetuous Justinian marvelled when he heard that he was ready to set sail.

A number of friends, who now dared to show themselves as such, accompanied him on foot to the Golden-horn, and saw him embark in his

galley. As they went, for the first time Leontius gave utterance to his feelings.

“From the first moment,” he said, “when, drawn forth from my dungeon, I found myself invested with command in Greece,—when they put upon me the purple robe and saluted me general of the fleet, a voice seemed to whisper in my ear, ‘Beware, Leontius! Let not the voice of flattery deceive thee, nor the lying tongue of Hope beguile thine ear. Thou art but a victim drawn forth from the stalls and decked out with garlands for the sacrifice.’ Since I have been free, nothing but tales of bloodshed and tyranny have met my ear: how, then, shall I escape, when better men daily perish?”

A friend who walked by his side bent down and whispered a word in his ear. “Fear not, Leontius,” he said. “Be bold—be true to your country and yourself—deliver us from a tyrant, and the sceptre shall be your reward.”

“Let me hear more, and speedily,” replied

the general. His friend pressed his hand in silence ; and Leontius mounted the side of his galley, and was soon steering away towards the Hellespont.

CHAPTER II.

ONCE again it was evening : once again the splendid heavens glowed with the rosy light of the parting sun : once again, over the head of Justinian, spread the canopy of purple and gold, such as no imperial treasury could produce ; but there was a star in that sky, shining at first feebly, but gaining brightness momentarily as the sun sunk, which had not been there on the night of the liberation of Leontius.

The emperor reclined upon the terrace at the highest point of the gardens of his palace. A beautiful boy, in the garb of a slave, sat at his

feet with an instrument of music in his hand ;
and with a voice of almost more than mortal
sweetness, sung to his lord and master, while the
breeze stirred the orange and the myrtle trees
around, and the eunuchs leaned upon the vases
and pedestals, with ear inclined and bended head,
as if rapt with the music.

SONG.

“ Sweet is the glow in western skies,
On Thetis’ breast when Titan lies,
And languid pours, from closing eyes,
The light of love.

“ The ruby wine, the blushing rose,
The wind from violet banks that blows
Are full of sweets ; but what are those
To dreams of love ?

“ Gay halls of state, the golden throne,
Have joys, to monarchs given alone,
I envy not, if for my own
I have but love.

“The festal dance, the myrtle shade,
Hybla’s sweet fields, or Tempe’s glade,
Were dark, by whate’er light displayed,
Unlit by love.

“The vanquished giant asked a lyre;
Prometheus robbed the heavens of fire;
But from the gods my one desire
Is love—but love.”

“Or vengeance,” muttered Justinian. “Sing me some other song, boy. I love not that.”

“You used to love it, Cæsar,” replied the boy.

“It matters not,” answered his lord. “I love it not now.”

He spoke in a sharp tone; and the boy instantly swept his hand over the strings and sang:—

SONG.

“Ah, the merry, merry day is gone;
But the merry, merry night is here.
Leave me the past to its dark fate alone,
Its grave is not worthy a tear.

“ If one star be gone to its shadowy rest,
A thousand as bright are burning on high,
If one flower fade in the warmth of thy breast,
There are more in the garden hard by.

“ To-morrow, to-morrow, what is it to me ?
I know not to-morrow will ever be here ;
The moment of life is the whole we can see :
The present is all that is clear.”

“ Bad verse, and bad music !” said Justinian waving his hand ; but day is indeed gone ; and the rebel stars are coming out to triumph in his overthrow. Let us in ! But hark ! What shout is that ?”

“ It comes from the side of the port,” said one of the eunuchs, listening : “ some tumult amongst the seamen.”

“ From the prison, rather,” said the emperor. “ Some one run down by the terraces and see. What is it they cry there below ? To Saint Sophia ! To Saint Sophia ! What would they at the church ? Away ! see what is taking place below.”

Two or three of the attendants hastened away ; and the emperor turned and entered the palace ; but the first hall was vacant ; and when he looked round for those who should have followed him from the gardens, only two or three were to be seen. A heavy frown gathered on his brow ; but his cheek did not turn pale nor his eye quail.

Did he understand the meaning of all he saw and heard—the rising roar of tumult from the town beneath—the vacant halls—the silence of the palace—the stealthy flight of his attendants ?

Methinks he did.

The boy with the lyre came and crouched fearfully at his feet. But Justinian laid his hand upon his curly head, and said in a low but firm voice—“ Get thee gone, child. There is danger at hand.

‘ The moment of life is the whole we can see :

The present is all that is clear.’ ”

But the lad still stayed and clung to his

knees, as if he had so long been taught that safety and protection were there, as not to be able to conceive, that, in an earthquake, a fortress or a temple are more perilous places than a hovel or a bare hill-side.

A moment after a tall negro rushed in--a giant in height and strength. He had a naked sword in his hand; and there was a mark of blood upon his brow.

"I will die here," he cried, placing himself before the emperor with his face to the door. "Oh, if I had but a hundred hands to strike with me, we should still drive them back."

"A hundred!" said Justinian, with a strange, solemn laugh; "is it not enough that there are two who are faithful? Put up your sword, Seneca; and wipe your brow. Why should you draw the lightning on your head when the bolt is aimed at me?"

The man cast himself at his feet and kissed his hand "Because to me you have been ever

kind, Augustus," he replied; "but oh, sir, they have forced the gate. The prefect is slain."

His words were interrupted by the influx of an armed crowd, driving a number of terrified slaves before them.

"Where is the monster—the tyrant—the fiend?" shouted a thousand voices.

"Here is the emperor!" replied Justinian, with a voice as firm, an eye as steady, and a brow as calm as in the days of his loftiest rule.

"Down with him!"—"Slay him!" cried several voices.

"No, no! To the Hippodrome!" cried a tongue that overpowered all the rest, and a number of others took up the words—"To the Hippodrome!—to the Hippodrome!"

They seized upon the defenseless prince and dragged him fiercely along—down through the gilded halls, amidst all the emblems of his past power, and fruitless splendor—out into the busy streets thronged with dark multitudes, who but

a day before bowed low at his approach, and trembled at his frown—on through long rows of marble palaces, and costly works and columns and statues—children born to the goddess when Art was a divinity.

The multitude pressed upon the little crowd that led him captive; and he heard around shouts and execrations and loud cries of “He is taken—he is here—the tyrant is in safe hands.” But Justinian only spoke once as they hurried him on. “Is there such haste?” he asked almost scornfully; and that was all.

At length, passing under the triumphal arch, they entered the Hippodrome. The day was done: the night had fallen dark and heavy: no moon was up: the stars twinkled far and faint above. Long lines of statues and obelisks were dimly seen between the goals, like black giants, standing high above the scattered crowds that moved through the vast space; but at the other end there was a spot where a glare of torches,

soon lost in the gloom around, formed a bright spot on the dark shadowy curtain of the night, across which a waving sea of heads were seen swaying to and fro, while raised above the rest, as if upon a throne, sat a tall, dusky figure, gloried by the blaze.

Toward it the captors dragged on their unresisting captive; and in a few minutes, in the midst of a little area, with thousands of fierce faces illuminated by the torch-lights, Justinian stood before the seat of Leontius, each clothed in the purple: the emperor of yesterday: the emperor of to-day.

“The tyrant stands before you!” cried Leontius, “pronounce his doom!”

There was a moment’s awful silence, and then innumerable voices said “Death! Death! Death!”

“Death!” shouted the lips of Justinian. “I give my voice for death!”

Leontius gazed on him sternly, thoughtfully.

Their eyes met and fixed firm and stern upon each other. Each brow contracted; but no eye-lid winked.

“No!” said Leontius at length, in a voice that crushed all other sounds—“I pardon him. My first imperial act shall be an act of clemency. I loved his father well. Let him take his life; but he is banished to Chersonæ, and never let him set his foot again beyond the Euxine.”

“I will mutilate him however,” exclaimed a butcher, rushing upon him with a knife, and slashing his face with a deep cut.

“Cowardly slave!” cried the fallen monarch; and breaking from the hands that held him, he struck his assailant a blow that made the teeth chatter and the jaw-bone crash.

Some men in arms interposed; and hurried him away. At first, a crowd followed; but it grew less and less. One dropped away and then another. The streets became less thronged—then almost solitary. Silence, except from their

own hurried tramp, pervaded the deserted streets toward the port ; but from a distance came the distant sounds of shouts of joy, and merry laughter, and gay ribald songs, grating harshly on the exile's ear.

There was a galley with some lights upon the deck and the sails unfurled. He was hurried rapidly on board ; two or three, who had followed at a little distance, and as if in fear, crept silently and almost unperceived from the quay to the deck ; a friendly voice whispered in his ear, "To sea, with all speed, lest the tide turn. The galley is your own. Another day may come."

"'To sea !" said Justinian, aloud ; and there at least his voice was still obeyed.

CHAPTER III.

ON a high hill in the beautiful Crimea, or Tauris Chersonese—then a wide uncultivated waste of hill and valley—looking over the waters of the Euxine toward its outlet into the Propontis, stood a solitary stranger, with the small town of Chersonæ lying far below beneath his feet. There was an air of majesty about his person, and his form was fine and powerful. His face also was singularly handsome, although there was a deep scar across the cheek and nose. He was armed like a Roman general, and his hand rested on the hilt of his sword.

Far, far over the distant sea was seen a galley, with her white wings spread to the favoring breeze ; and her course was directed toward Byzantium, distant, and out of sight. The thoughts of the stranger followed her on her way across the waters, and he sighed as he remembered the city of Constantine, her gardens, palaces, and temples. Once more, in fancy, he walked amidst the olives ; once more he trod the porphyry halls ; once more he sat upon the imperial throne, and nations bowed before his nod. It all seemed a dream—a vision of the night, full of the strong realities of unfettered imagination, which crumble beneath the first material touch.

The first thing that roused him from his reverie was the sight of a young boy climbing up the rocks, with an instrument of music on his shoulder. It embarrassed him in his ascent ; and as he came near the top Justinian held out his hand to him, and aided him up.

“ Foolish boy,” he said, “ why quit your

sports and pastimes to follow hither broken fortunes and a lonely heart?"

"I come to sing you the songs you loved in times of your Augustus," answered the boy.

"Know you not, boy," said the fallen monarch, "that the songs we used to love in happy days blend not with the sorrows of the present. All melody has its harmonies in the breast as well as on the lyre. You could not sing me any song I have heard upon my throne, that would not touch a discordant note in my heart, here upon this rock. Mark you that cloud? See how it seems to writhe and twist over the sea. It moves not from one place; but yet in that place how it varies in a thousand hideous forms. Such are the thoughts within me. That cloud, I think, is charged with thunder. Let it burst! It cannot reach us here."

The boy sat down at his feet, and gazed at the cloud on which his lord was commenting.

“It is like a huge dolphin,” he said, “wallowing in the brine.”

“And now like one of the bags of Eolus,” rejoined Justinian. “Ha! was I not right?”

As he spoke, a gust of wind, so strong and fierce that the strong man could hardly stand against it, swept over the mountain from the sea. The dust flew wide like mist over the landscape, and the branches of the trees were cracked and rent. For less than five minutes the tempest raged; and then as suddenly subsided as it had risen. A dull, brooding calm succeeded on the wind; but still the white topped waves chased each other furiously along over the wide watery expanse beneath.

“Give me thy hand, boy,” said Justinian, “there is something more coming. I feel it in the sultriness of the air: I feel it, too, in my own heart. It is like the calm of that day whose evening saw my fall. The elements are preparing

to war against the law that binds them, and wait in silence for the hour.”

“Let us go down into the town,” said the boy.

“No, we will stay here and watch,” replied Justinian. “I have no diadem now to draw the thunder down. High things are struck—the lowly head rests safe.”

As he spoke, a roaring, rushing sound was heard. One could not tell if it came from the earth or from the air. The dark sea rolled back from the rocky coast in one tremendous billow. Chasms, and deep rocks, and green slimy weeds were seen, far distant from the shore. The mysterious pavement of the eternal deep was thrown open to the eye, and huge fishes that the day had never seen lay panting in the open noon.

The solid earth shook; the rocks were rent; large fragments tumbled down into the abyss below. They who stood upon the hill above

could see the Christian church reel and waver and tremble, as if palsied, and the old Pagan temple crumble and fall in ruins on the plains.

The shock lasted but a moment, yet to the poor boy it seemed an age ; and when all was still, Justinian pressed the youth's hand, saying, " See what love has saved you from. You came hither to console a fallen lord ; and you have saved your own life. We are secure ; few are left alive in Chersonæ."

"I came for more than to console you, Augustus," replied the boy, sitting down at his feet. " I came to warn you."

"How," cried his master ; " thou art not a diviner ? Wise must he be in the signs of stars and elements who could foretell this earthquake an hour ago."

"There are other earthquakes more easily foretold," replied the boy. "The people of Chersonæ plot against you. Fallen princes rarely live long, if they trust to the forbearance of

usurpers. Leontius seeks cause of offence. The curia here are instructed to find it for him; and they are even now busily manufacturing charges against you."

"Oh, false Leontius!" exclaimed Justinian, "Are all my efforts to forgive thy crime, and forget what once I was, in vain? Be it so! Vengeance and empire shall be henceforth my objects; and to them all shall be sacrificed. Boy, there are many of our friends scattered round—some in the city, some in the fields; some who followed us here, some made since we were exiles. Seek them out straight. Tell every man that Justinian is about to ride afar; and bid him, if he would go with me, join me at the western-gate to-morrow at sunrise."

"You would not go to Constantinople?" asked the boy; "the time is not yet come."

"No, no!" answered his lord; "safety first; then dominion; then vengeance. I go to seek safety, lad. Where, I know not yet; but some-

thing tells me we shall find it. Speed away—yet stay ! Here is another shock.”

Another, and another came ; but, at length, the earth seemed to have regained its calmness, and the emperor and the boy descended the hill. Many had perished in Chersonæ, and amongst them some of Justinian’s most faithful friends ; but on the following morning, early, more than two hundred mounted men assembled outside the western gate and rode rapidly away.

CHAPTER IV.

RAISE your eyes and look afar. The scene is a strange and remarkable one. What an immense unbroken plain, stretching afar to the right and left on one unbroken level, till sky and earth are one. Not a tree, not a shrub, not a mound, not a hillock meets the eye, though that slight, dusky wave, many miles away, may perchance be a forest. I know not, but if it be, it is eaten up in the vastness of the expanse. The mightiness of the old primæval giants of the wood, what is it to the mightiness of the eternal plain around. All long grass, and tall, whispering reeds; there is nothing else to be seen.

Yet cast your eye forward—far, far on—the distance cannot be less than forty or fifty miles, and you see something rising up above the flat level on which you stand; a blue wall stretching across the sky. It does not look very high, but there it is, distinct enough, an elevation of the country in the distance, and beyond that another line still fainter, catching a golden gleam which seems not from our sky or our sun; it is so far, far away.

There is a solitary man standing there, and gazing round him, with his horse cropping the rank grass of the plain by his side. He bears a lofty air, and there is vigor and power upon that elevated brow, but he looks as gloomy—as uncheerful as the scene amidst which he stands. He has a javelin in his hand, and a broad-sword by his side; and there is a bow and sheaf of arrows hanging at his saddle.

“I must have food,” he said, “I must have food; yet where can it be found? Strange, if

the pampered emperor, who revelled in luxuries so short a time since, should perish of hunger in this Scythian waste !”

He spoke with a strange, bitter smile, and then added, “ But it is good for me ; these adversities—this lying on the damp ground—this camping under heaven—this privation, hunger, thirst—it is good, very good. It hardens the body ; it hardens the mind and the heart.”

As he spoke, he saw something move in the tall grass at some two or three hundred yards’ distance. It seemed to be a speck. It might have been a butterfly could he have seen so far ; but yet it gave him hope, and quietly approaching his horse’s side, he mounted without disturbing the beast, who continued eagerly to crop the grass. Still the eyes of Justinian were upon the spot where he had seen something move, and now he could perceive the branching tips of a deer’s antlers. He got ready the bow, placed an arrow in the string, and remembering the sports

in which he had excelled in youth, he urged his horse quietly forward toward the object he had seen. Suddenly, up bounded the stag, gazed at him for an instant, and then sped away across the plain. The bow-string twanged; the arrow flew whistling toward the mark, but the distance was too great. In a curving line the missile sunk as it flew, and struck the ground some ten or twelve yards behind the flank of the stag.

It was a noble beast, heavy and fat with age and pampered feeding.

“I must not spend another hour,” thought Justinian. “I can surely ride him down and reach him with my javelin.”

On went the stag; on went the Roman after him, often approaching near; but ever, when hard pressed, the beast, who seemed to find sport in his flight, put forth his agility and strength, and was away far, far ahead toward the distant wood. Then, again, when he had got good space he would slacken his pace, take breath, and

pursue his course at a mere trot. Thus onward they went, pursuing and pursued for nearly two hours ; but then Justinian perceived some objects moving in advance of him, and a little to the westward, who, though partially concealed by the long grass and weeds, and still at a great distance, he judged to be a large body of mounted men.

“Perhaps they may be my friends,” he said to himself, “but I will not give up the chase till I have brought that beast down. This fiery hunger must have relief. His strength is failing, too. He goes more slowly even at his speed.”

On, on they went ; and now, indeed, the fallen monarch gained upon the quarry. At the end of a mile he was much nearer ; but still he would not venture to cast his javelin. At the end of another mile there was not twenty yards between them ; and checking his horse, the monarch threw with true and steady aim ; the weapon stuck in the beast’s shoulder, and with a

convulsive bound, he sunk down and rolled over on the ground. Justinian was upon him in a moment, and the sword plunged deep into his throat.

While thus employed, the fallen monarch, in his eagerness, had not remarked that the horsemen he had seen had approached him closely. But now, while busy over the prostrate deer, he heard the sounds of human voices, and horses' feet all around him, and looking up, he found himself surrounded by two or three hundred wild-looking men in strange attire. Their beards were long, and ignorant of the comb. Their garments coarse, and principally composed of skins. Each carried a long, light spear, and two bows hung by every saddle; their eyes were large and fine, but many of their faces were hard and repulsive.

“Stand back,” cried Justinian, in the Greek tongue, seeing that they pressed upon him somewhat closely. “I am famishing, and will have food.”

They seemed not to understand him, but just then another party, consisting of six or seven persons, better, and even richly attired, came up, and amongst them were several women. One, a bright, beautiful girl, perhaps of eighteen years of age, mounted on a small grey horse, rough in the coat, but perfect in form, seemed to exercise some control around, for as she waved a short gilded spear which she carried in her hand, the rude men fell back on either side, and riding up to the stranger, she said, in his own language, "Who art thou, sir?"

Justinian gazed at her in surprise. She was very beautiful, and the gentle softness of her eyes, and fair complexion seemed to bespeak a milder breeding than those wild wastes could afford. Yet she was armed almost like the men who surrounded her. By her saddle hung the two bows and the two quivers, and in her hand, as I have mentioned, waved the lance. Her dress, however, bespoke a much higher rank.

Gold and jewels blazed in her girdle. On her arms were rich bracelets, and the fine lawns of Roman manufacture, fringed and embroidered with gold, were mingled strangely, to the eye of Justinian, with the ruder materials of the barbarian guard. She spoke the Greek tongue beautifully, however, and he could hardly fancy that she had not been born under his own sway.

“ Lady,” he replied, “ I am an exile and a stranger. By accident I have been separated from my followers, and for two days I have sought them in vain, till here, half famished, I have been forced to turn hunter for my food.” The lady smiled, and held out her hand to him; but Justinian looked at his own, saying, “ Mine is covered with blood.”

“ Nay, then, mount and come with me,” she replied. “ I am not fond of bloody hands; but you shall soon have better food than this; and if you must needs have with you the object of your long chase,—for we have watched you all across

the plain—my people shall bring this into the camp.”

Justinian wiped his hands in the grass, withdrew the javelin from the deer, returned his sword into its sheath, and springing on his horse's back, was soon riding on by the beautiful girl's side. She looked at him more than once with an inquiring glance, and a slight, meaning smile; and at length she said, “Methinks that sword, with its eagle-headed hilt, looks like an emperor's.”

“It is not so now,” replied Justinian.

“And that javelin,” she said, in the same playful tone, “it is better than we make here. It must have come from the imperial city.”

“It did, indeed,” replied Justinian. “It is the last of three.”

“Perchance it may prove the strongest of the three,” replied his bright companion, in a meaning tone. “But let us not riddle, noble stranger. Are you not he of whom my brother

has lately heard, the Great Emperor Justinian, driven from his throne by the usurper?"

"That fortunate man, lady," replied Justinian.

"Fortunate?" said the lady.

"Ay!" replied Justinian, "first, because to enjoy prosperity we must know adversity; and secondly," he added, bowing his head, and letting his eyes confirm his words, "to have known you is no mean exchange for a throne."

"Oh! you Greeks, you Greeks!" cried his fair companion, "were there ever flattering tongues like yours?"

"I am no Greek, but a Roman, lady," answered the monarch; "and I speak the truth, as I feel it at this moment. But how did you know—how has any one heard of my being here in this wilderness?"

"From the lips of your friends and followers," she answered. "They are all safe at my brother's camp, but a short distance behind the wood. They might have been merry, but

they were in mortal terror lest you should be starved on these plains.”

“ Yet one question more,” said the fallen emperor, “ and I have done. How come you, so far from the civilized world, to speak Greek as purely as if it were your native tongue ? ”

“ Because my mother was a Greek,” she replied, “ and because I have been taught to embroider, and play on instruments of music, and sing in a Greek city where I was placed, that there might be no chance of my losing my mother’s faith amongst these pagan men.”

“ And your name ? ” asked Justinian, in a gentle tone.

“ Is Theodora,” replied his beautiful companion.

“ Theodora ?—that is strange. Theodora was the name also of the wife of the first Justinian.”

A blush like that of the morning spread warm over the sweet girl’s face, and she put her

horse into quicker pace, saying, "Let us ride on."

At the end of about an hour, as they went circling round the wood to which they were now close, a new scene began to open on the sight of Justinian. Large herds of cattle and horses first appeared, quietly cropping the grass of the plain, sometimes untended, sometimes followed by a single watcher. Then came a number of small tents of a dingy hue, and then a larger encampment, amongst which some splendid pavilions were seen, and one especially of immense extent. Amongst the tents numerous groups appeared, both on horseback and on foot, generally clothed in the barbarian garb, but here and there were seen persons in the Roman habit, in whom the emperor recognised some of those who had followed him from Chersonæ. As soon as they beheld him, they raised their voices and shouted, "The emperor, the emperor!" and a number of them gathered round. But his fair companion

led him on to the entrance of the great pavilion, and with the simplicity of barbarian manners brought him at once into the presence of her brother.

When informed of his name and station, the barbarian chief rose up from the skin on which he was sitting, and embraced him warmly, saying, "Welcome, Justinian, still emperor in my eyes; and the more welcome, coming thus alone in danger and adversity, than if you had approached in all the splendor of your state."

"Fine sentiments, brother, and in not bad Greek," said his sister, laughing gaily; "but the emperor requires more solid proofs of friendship. The mighty monarch is in need of what we barbarians can give him amply—food, chosen food! You know that even a great Khan can sometimes starve with hunger. Come, Justinian—come into my apartments. My women have, doubtless, all ready by this time for the mid-

day meal ; and my brother, too, shall be admitted, if he promises to leave enough to satisfy a half-famished man—for he is a mighty eater.”

CHAPTER V.

SOME weeks had passed ; the summer was in its full heat, and the plains were scorched and arid ; the hills, however, which approached to the eastern bank of the lake Mæotis, raised high into a cooler atmosphere, were green and fresh, full of luxuriant valleys, and waving with cool and verdant woods. Upon the slope of one of the hills, beneath a wide-spreading tree, which had seen the rise, and now witnessed the decline of the Roman empire in the east, sat Justinian, by the side of Theodora, in the softened light of evening the large encampment of her brother lay

in a cool valley to the eastward, and the innumerable tents and herds of cattle were beneath the eyes of the lovers when they looked on that side. On the other, beyond a plain stretching to the banks of the lake, they could see a large town, partly apparently in ruins, but still, it would seem, boasting of numerous inhabitants. Justinian had never known that such a city had been under his sway. But it was not of cities or of subjects that he thought then. His eyes, as he sat beside her, turned to those of Theodora, and all his thoughts were of her.

“Then you will be mine?” he said. “You cannot have confessed so much without implying the promise.”

She bent her eyes upon the ground, and her cheek was paler than usual. “I will,” she answered, distinctly, “if you will promise me something in return. Will you—can you, cast from you all thought of recovering your empire, and dwell here with me in this lonely barbarous

state, without making an effort to recover the power you have lost, which, if successful, would only diminish our happiness, and if unsuccessful would seal your fate, and leave me to despair?"

"I can," replied Justinian, boldly. "Never in the brightest days of power, or the softest hours of pleasure, have I known such happiness as by your side, Theodora; and how doubly sweet will this life be, when you are my own for ever. Empire could add nothing to it, but might take much away; and I promise you from my heart, as long as I am left here at peace, I will make no effort to change this humble course of existence for the perilous joys of power."

"And tell me, Justinian, tell me," said Theodora, "for your words have sometimes frightened me, that you will forgive your enemies, I am a Christian, Justinian, and I must have a Christian husband."

Justinian pressed his hand upon his brow, and thought sternly for a moment. "Well,

Theodora, well," he said, "I will forgive them—I do forgive them, if they will not rouse again the serpent in my bosom. All I ask is peace, safety, and thee. Surely they may leave me this, of all my empire; and if they do, I will spend no further thought upon them. And now, beloved, when wilt thou be mine? Thy brother has already promised his consent."

"He has promised me more," answered Theodora, with a smile; "He has promised to give thee as my dower yon city of Phanagoria. It is a small gift for him; for he loves not cities, and will not dwell within walls. Gold is the only thing he loves, besides freedom, and the chase, and myself."

"But when, dearest Theodora, when?" asked Justinian, encircling her with his arms.

"When you will, Justinian," she replied, "In our simple life these things require not all the long delays of your negotiated marriages in the great civilized world of Rome; nor do our

simple hearts affect an unwillingness we do not feel." She blushed as she spoke, but then added in a firmer tone, "A Christian priest must bless our union. One, however, can be easily found in Phanagoria yonder; and when he has been brought, I am yours."

There was great rejoicing on the following day in the camp of the Khan; mead flowed, flowers were scattered, the banquet and the revel lasted long into the night; but Justinian and Theodora were afar. An old palace of the prefect, in the town of Phanagoria—once a great city, but long since actually, but not nominally, withdrawn from the dominion of Rome—had been prepared and decorated for the lover and his bride, and there passed by many an after hour of happiness. Sailing in the summer days upon the bosom of the lake, following the chase into the mountains in autumn or in winter, each hour seemed but to increase the love of Justinian for Theodora; and instead of possession pro-

ducing satiety, it seemed as if love grew but by its return.

The vain, the light, the vicious may ask, how long did this last? A month—ay, months and years. Where love ceases, on the part of a husband who has truly loved, there must always be some hard fault on the part of a wife. She must either have snapped the strong cord asunder by one rash blow, or have ground it through to nothing by slow repeated acts. Justinian saw no fault in Theodora and loved her ever.

Peacefully passed their mutual lives. The thoughts of empire and of power would, indeed, return from time to time; and they would cast him into fits of deep thought, from which it required a strong effort to rouse himself. Clouds would come upon his brow like thunder gathering upon a mountain-top; but one smile—one word from Theodora would sweep them all away, and peace, which a palace could never give, joy, such as a throne had never

known, surrounded him in his humble residence by Mæotis's side.

The residence of the brother of Justinian's bride, had been moved many times, as was the habit of his wandering life, during the two years and a half which had elapsed. His power and territories had increased while contentions desolated Constantinople, and the eastern empire became weak in the hands that held it. Suddenly an embassy from the reigning emperor appeared at the camp of the Khan, then seated some hundred miles away from Phanagoria. There were secret meetings and long consultations; and those who had known and admired Justinian, and had loved their monarch's sister, began to entertain rash, wild hopes, in which none but a simple people could have indulged. It was rumored in the camp that the citizens of Constantinople longed for their monarch's return; that they found they had only changed for the worse, and that the evils against which

they had risen had been far exceeded by those which had followed under the rule which they themselves had chosen. Hope that the husband of their princess might ere long be recalled to his throne, took possession of many a heart in the camp; and they seemed never to ask themselves if such were the object of the embassy, why did the ambassadors come in the emperor's name. Large sums of gold, too, had been brought into the camp, and suddenly disappeared in the great pavilion of the Khan.

Tidings of all that was taking place were sent by many to Theodora, in the expectation that they would give joy and satisfaction: but Theodora's brow grew clouded, and her colour failed, and her eye took an anxious look, as soon as she heard or read the account of these embassies. Nothing did she say to her husband, but she made eager enquiries, and she learned to fear and tremble.

One evening Justinian was sitting in the

porch looking over the lake. The lad who had followed him so faithfully into exile had been playing and singing before him and Theodora, and had now retired into an inner chamber. Theodora herself had left him for a short time to look upon that sweetest sight, a woman's heart—the slumber of her childhood; and the mind of Justinian went back to other days more peacefully than perhaps it had ever done before. With uplifted eye and open brow, he said, “I was wretched then amidst all my glory. I am happy now, even in this plain solitude.”

Why rushes Theodora in so hastily? Why is that unwonted terror in her beautiful face?

“Quit, Justinian, quit!” she cried. “They betray thee, my lord and lover, they betray thee! They have sent gold to my brother to deliver thee up or to slay thee here; and two of his head men are even now in the city consulting with the citizens how they may best take thee. My brother's commands are here all powerful.

Call all thy friends around thee with the utmost speed."

The face of Justinian changed. The fierce and fiery look of other days so long absent, came back upon him. "I will," he said, taking up his sword which lay by him, "and if needs be, I will die boldly."

"I will die with thee," cried Theodora.

But Justinian only replied, "Stay thou there," and strode into the house.

The first room was vacant; so also was the second, but there were sounds in the third—sounds as if of strife. They deterred not Justinian, and on he went. The boy, the young musician, lay prostrate and dead before him; and two men, whose faces he knew well, were bending over the poor lad, and withdrawing a cord of sinews from his neck. Justinian's sword was out of its sheath in a moment. One fierce thrust, and one vengeful blow were all that was needed, and the emperor stood alone amongst the dead.

Theodora had stolen after him, and casting herself at his feet she embraced his knees, exclaiming, “ Fly, my husband, fly ! These men are but the precursors. More will follow—too many to be resisted. Oh, look not so fierce, Justinian, as if thou wouldst stay and combat with the world. Rightly has thou dealt with these, but ere another day rise and set this city will be full of enemies. Fly thou alone, or with what followers can be gathered together hastily. I will seek my brother’s camp and melt his heart. No one has power over him but me when opposed to gold—but look at your Theodora—look as if you loved her once more. Alas ! poor boy, thou hast changed thy master into stone with thy cold, deadly look. He hears not even Theodora.”

Justinian passed his bloody hand across his brow and cleared it of the terrible frown it had assumed. For one brief moment he pressed Theodora to his heart, consulted with her for a

few minutes in a low tone, and then hurrying out through the different apartments of the palace, called to him all his followers who were within the walls.

They assembled in the chamber where death had been so busy, and the tale of blood was soon told. No long consultations were now necessary. Flight afforded the only chance of safety, and with an aching heart Justinian tore himself away from Theodora, and pursued his way in haste toward Bulgaria. There were fierce and vengeful thoughts in his mind as he went.

A few days after, there was a ship upon the stormy Euxine; and Justinian stood upon the deck with a number of his followers round him. The wind blew in tempest. The sea yawned, gaping for the ship. The waves towered high up, till they seemed to overtop the mast. Sails had been rent to shivers, cordage and spars carried away, the oars of the galley were useless, and she drifted ungovernable upon the waters.

Even the seamen had given up all to despair. Stern, lofty, and unbending, Justinian stood, biding the pelting of the storm. Many were at their prayers—many were offering up vows to Heaven ; and one of the Romans whispered to the emperor, “ Oh, sir, vow to God that if he will spare us now, you will spare your enemies hereafter, should you ever recover your empire. By chance he may hear you and grant your prayer.”

Justinian turned fiercely upon him, and exclaimed, “ I have bowed my head to my fate ; I have sought peace and mediocrity ; I have tasted love and happiness ; and I asked, but that my enemies would leave my humble hearth at peace. They would not do it : They have roused the lion from his sleep, and I tell thee, man, that let God overwhelm me in these waters, let the sea gape and swallow us all alive, I will not spare one single head of my enemies, if they ever should be within my reach.”

The sea spared him ; the land received him ;

and in a few days he reached the city of the King of Bulgaria. There was a fierce energy roused in the fallen monarch's breast, which gave him back all his pride and dignity. He advanced into the presence of the barbarian chief, with a step as firm and haughty as if all the legions of conquering Rome had been at his back ; and he was received with honor and with deference.

Few words sufficed with a fierce barbarian ever ready for war. A contract was soon made, and in three days the dusky myriads of Bulgaria were assembled upon the plain. Justinian, with his Roman followers, was on the right of the barbarian chief, and he it was who, waving his sword in the air, gave the word, "To Constantinople !"

CHAPTER VI.

THE Khan of the Chozars feared to see his sister. He caused her to be treated with all love and kindness. Attendants surrounded her. Honor and respect were shown her, but her brother's face she could not see; and but little information could she obtain from without. For sixteen days the camp moved every day. The marches were long and fatiguing; but the Khan was always in advance; and the fearful rumour reached Theodora's ear, that her brother was marching with all his forces in pursuit of her husband, and to the support of his enemies.

Bitterly did Theodora weep ; and as they were amongst the first tears she had ever shed, so were they the saddest.

At the end of the seventeenth day she was in her tent with her child and her women. There was much noise and confusion in the camp—a sound of persons hurrying hither and thither, horses galloping, and many people speaking loud. Theodora had learnt to tremble at every sound, and she sent forth one of her attendants to ask what had occurred.

The woman could bring her back no intelligence. “Some great event has happened,” she said, “for there is much terror and confusion in the camp ; and I walked to the top of the hill, whence I beheld a multitude of lights spread over a wide space, at a distance, as if there were a great city before us, or a camp upon a hill.”

Theodora mused ; but in a few moments there was the sound of many horses coming near. She and her attendants were led forth and

put in litters, as if for instant flight ; and then, surrounded with horsemen, they were borne on at a rapid rate along a road which to her fears seemed interminable.

At length, after passing some water—for though the curtains were close drawn, she could hear the plashing sound of oars—they seemed to come to some large archway, for voices speaking in the Greek tongue were echoed round, as if sent back from some vaulted roof.

Then again the litter moved forward ; and she could resist no longer, but drew back the curtain and looked out. Tall houses of marble, long rows of columns, obelisks pointing up beyond her sight, statues looking like ghosts in the obscurity, innumerable lights moving here and there with great rapidity ; loud tongues talking and singing and laughing, surrounded her on every side ; and she dropped the curtain again, bewildered, amazed, and fearful.

At length the litter stopped, the curtains

were drawn back ; and one of her brother's officers, who stood by the side, desired her to descend. It was vain even to inquire where she was, or what was to be her fate.

“ I shall soon know all,” thought Theodora, and followed in silence.

They were standing before an arch of exquisitely sculptured marble ; and on the left there was a glistening sea. Beyond the arch were gardens, with fountains, statues, ballustrades and terraces ; and the odour of innumerable flowers greeted the sense, varying with every step. There were several men under the arch, some in Greek and some in barbarian attire ; and four of them held torches, with which they lighted her up the snowy marble-steps from one terrace to another.

“ Where am I ? ” thought Theodora. “ Am I sold for a slave ? I can die—yes, I can die.”

A vast palace spread out before her, of many a different style of architecture, but all beautiful in design and costly in material. She was led

through a high arch into a lordly hall, all blazing with light, where multitudes were passing to and fro, and then through a curtained door into another hall, where a scene such as she had never witnessed burst upon her eyes.

On the right and left, sweeping round in a wide circle, were a multitude, each one of whom seemed in her eyes a prince. Men and women were there, some aged and venerable, some young and beautiful, blazing with gold and purple, and scarlet. But high upon a throne, with his feet level with the heads of the rest, clad in a plain purple robe, with a golden sword upon his knee, and a wreath of laurel upon his head, sat one figure, on which all eyes were turned. Theodora stopped short and gazed, then, with a wild cry of joy, stretched forth her arms ; and, ere she knew how or why, she found herself seated on that imperial throne, and the arms of Justinian clasped around her.

“ Hail ! Hail ! Hail ! Justinian and Theo-

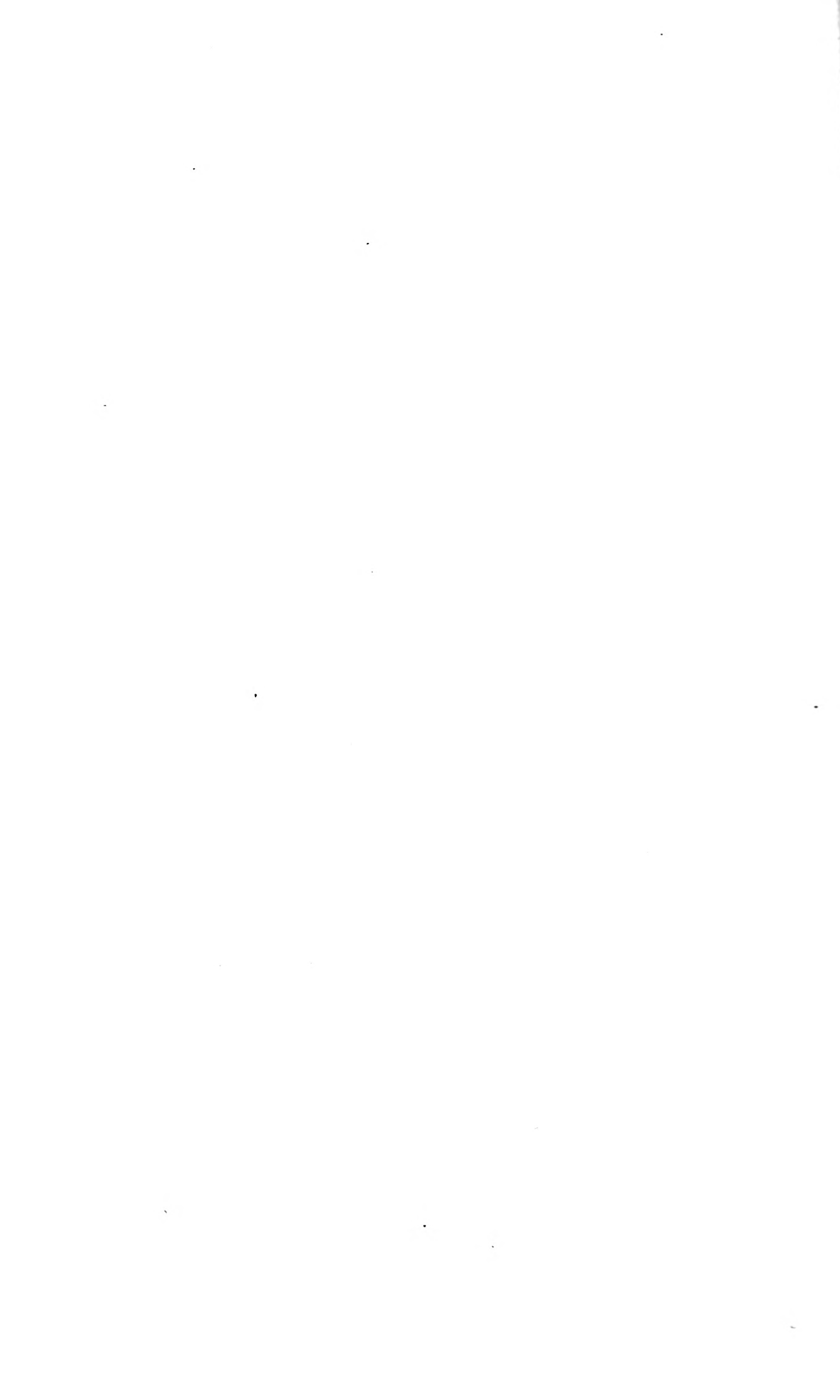
dora !” said a thousand voices ; and the envoy of the Khan, her brother, advanced a step saying, “Mighty emperor, the brother of the empress sends this lady in the day of your triumphs to plead for forgiveness and peace.”

“It is granted,” said Justinian, bowing his head ; and the people shouted gladly ; for they fancied that this mildness was to be read as an augury of his future reign.

THE END.

CHRISTIAN LACY.

A TALE OF THE SALEM WITCHCRAFT.



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CHAPTER I.

CLOSE to the head of a small cove running from the waters of the Merrimac about a quarter of a mile up into the country, and on the right bank of that fine river, sat a party of three men, on an early autumn night in the year 1691. The cove lies at the distance of some seven or eight miles from Haverhill, and above it on the course of the stream; and as it opens gently out into the broader waters of the river, it forms a sort of

alley for the eye, between banks still thickly wooded, by which the broad sheet of the larger stream can be reached.

On the night of which I speak, no moon was in the sky ; but the stars were shining overhead with that peculiar look of lustre and magnitude so seldom seen on the eastern side of the Atlantic ; and their light was quite sufficient to afford a sparkle here and there to the ripples of the Merrimac, while the cove itself lay dark, like a black abyss, under the thickly covered branches that hung over it. The chirp of the tree-crickets was still heard, and the voices of all the many small animals which gave a melancholy sort of life to an American night, had not yielded to the approach of the wintry season ; but yet the night was cold, with a tendency to frost ; and a keen wind came down from the bleak highlands of New Hampshire.

The three men, though at first sitting quite still, seemed in eager consultation, and there

was much need of consideration, although the topic they discussed was merely whether they should light a fire or not.

“ They would see the smoke if there were not a star in the sky,” said one man to the others.

“ Or smell it,” replied one of his companions; “ an Indian makes as much use of his nose as a dog.”

“ Then they would nose you out by the smell of fish-oil,” replied in a gayer tone the third of the watchers, a younger man than the other two. “ But joking apart,” he continued, “ they will not seek us, depend upon it. They look to villages and towns, for plunder as well as blood. Three scalps are not worth their taking, especially if they be as dear as ours are likely to be.”

“ Three scalps of the second company of minute-men were better worth to them than those of a dozen women and children,” replied one of his elder comrades in a proud tone, “ and

our arms are prize enough for the savages. If you are so cold, why do you not wrap your bear-skin round your feet?"

"How should they know that we are scouts?" asked the other; "if they see a single rise of smoke, they will think it nothing but the fire of a poor trapper, looking for bears or lynxes; and there is a sort of half-peace between the Indians and the trappers—the one being well nigh as savage as the other. But it is not alone for warmth that I would light the fire. I want it to be seen, and do not mind risking my scalp if they can take it. I will have two lives for one scalp, at all events. But the fact is this, I promised poor young Lacy to light a fire to let him see his way back to us. He went boldly out to do his duty well, and should not lack a friend's help to get in again."

"A boy like that should not be sent upon such business," replied the man upon whom lay the imputation of fish-oil. "He knows

naught of such things. They might as well send him to take a whale. What is he worth if he cannot find his way back for a distance of two miles."

"He is worth as much, or more than any of us," answered his somewhat younger companion; "if courage, and resolution, and a right heart are worth any thing."

"There, cease wrangling," said the elder of the three, "light a fire if you have promised it, John; for word pledged should never be broken. But we must none of us sleep to-night. Keep the guns ready, and see that your powder be dry, for the dew has been heavy."

Though probably having no especial authority over the others; for the companies of minute-men were somewhat irregularly constituted, the elder man's word seemed law to the others. The fire was speedily lighted without further opposition; the guns and pistols were examined; and then sitting down again together, the three entered

into low and irregular conversation, every now and then breaking off by common consent to listen when the wind stirred the branches of the trees, or any sound not perfectly familiar to their ears penetrated the silent forest. Their object was to keep each other from sleeping, and they talked of their distant homes as the topic most interesting to all.

Ah, it is sweet to talk of home, bright, dear, comfortable home, when wending our way over the dark waters, or through unknown lands, sitting beneath the roof of strangers or under the green leaves of the wood! Is there ever found a ray of sunshine so bright to the heart of the wanderer as even one thought of home?

The night wore on, and still the quiet talk continued.

“By the way, John Procter,” said the elder of the three, “they tell me there is discord in your village; the minister at war with his people—the pastor with his flock. How is this? It

should not be. Amongst a God-fearing and testifying people there should be nothing but harmony. But the fathers have departed to their rest, and the children will not walk after their way, I fear. Alack, it is sad to think that not one of those who led us forth from bondage in the evil times, is left to guide and admonish us now."

"Ah, this will all pass away," replied the younger man. "Master Harris is a godly and a powerful man, though somewhat over fond mayhap of this world's goods; but he will be taught that love will do more than law with the people of Salem village, and then all will be quiet again. Nothing will come of it, be you sure."

Little did that young man know what awful results would follow the incidents of which he spoke, nor how deeply they would affect him and his.

The third man, however, then took up the conversation, catching at one word which one of the preceding speakers had used.

“ Evil times you say, Father Giles,” he exclaimed. “ I am sure these are evil times enough. Are we not troubled with wars, oppressed with taxes, infested by heathen savages, a prey to wild beasts? and is not the Prince of the power of the air strong amongst us, seeking whom he may ensnare? Nay, has he not ensnared many to become his mere bond-servants and subjects?”

“ Nay, I know not that he has been more successful in that than he ever was,” replied the elder man; “ there have been witches and wizards in all times who bound themselves to the enemy, foreswore their allegiance to God, and gave themselves over to Satan. But bating the case which appeared in the good city of Boston, in the year of grace sixteen hundred and eighty-eight, just three years ago come the fourteenth of this month, I have not heard of such infernal doings in these parts for a long while.”

“ And who discovered it in eighty-eight,” asked the other; “ who but that pious and learned man,

Cotton Mather? Well, read what he says about witchcraft, and how prevalent it is. Does he not tell us that we are surrounded on every side with evil beings, that we see not or cannot discern? Does he not say that, if all the spectral appearances and molestations of evil angels, and tricks of necromancy, and bodily apparitions of Satan and his imps, could be collected and recounted, that are daily and nightly going on, all righteous and godly men's hair would stand on end with horror?"

"Nay, Heaven forbid that such things should be so common," replied the elder of the three. "I cannot think God would permit the enemy to have such power. That there are, and have been, and always will be, unhappy wretches who give themselves over, body and soul, to God's enemy and man's, there can be no doubt; but they are always of the wicked, who seek to do evil to others, to inflict pain, or bring misfortune. By their fruits ye shall know them; and I cannot think

there are many such amongst a God-fearing and righteous community like ours. A pious life cannot conduct to such an end, and when I look about and think of all the people that I know, I do not believe I could put my finger upon one who has not the truth of God at heart, and is not armoured against all the power of the enemy."

"You cannot tell, Giles—you cannot tell," replied the other; "it is not given to you to see into people's hearts. Cannot Satan himself appear as an angel of light?" Many whom you think pure and holy, sanctified vessels, babes of grace, may be all foul within, whited walls, children of perdition."

"I say, Roger, it would take a great deal to sanctify your vessel—of the scent of whale oil, I mean," replied the youngest of the three, with a laugh. "When I went on board of her last week, I am sure there must have been blubber still in the hold."

“Not an ounce,” cried the other indignantly, “she is as clean and sweet as a rose-bud.”

“Well, I was obliged to hold my nose,” answered the young man, “and if all rose-buds smell like that, let me be quit of a flower-garden. But tell us something more of these witches, how shall one know them?”

“Ay, that is difficult to say without trial, for which you and I have no commissions, John. They are for the most part, I have heard, old women, withered up and wrinkled with——”

“The devil must have a queer taste, then,” replied John Procter.

“Hush, thou art profane, boy,” said Giles, sternly, and the other, whom they called Roger, went on saying—

“Fools speak before they hear. I was about to tell you that they are generally withered and wrinkled up with their own malice and evil designs, long before age would have so touched them. Satan chooses his temptations well, lad,

and suits them to those he has to deal with. To youths he may present women and strong drink. To girls gauds and fine clothes, and other vanities—to others gold, or power, or the pampering of the belly—and to the old and cankered, the disappointed and the spiteful, he may offer means of tormenting or disquieting others. By every one whom he can lead over to his accursed flock he gains more and more power over the rest of mankind. So beware, lad, for be you sure this great enemy is even now abroad, and more active and powerful than ever. Hark! was not that a step?"

All instantly started upon their feet and grasped their guns, looking in the direction to which the speaker had turned himself. Nothing, however, was apparent, and no fresh sound was heard for a minute or two.

"It was your fancy, Roger," said the young man, "or else it was a witch who has conveyed herself away."

“It might be either,” replied the other gravely; “but I would have sworn that I heard a light step fall upon some withered weeds.”

“A pine cone falling from the trees,” said John Procter.

But almost at the same moment the other exclaimed—

“Look, look! There it goes like a shadow, down by the creek side. There, there! Just crossing the little gleam upon the water.”

Before the eyes of his two companions could catch the object he beheld, it had disappeared amongst the trees, so suddenly, so quietly, that even good Roger Greaves himself was doubtful whether it was a corporeal substance or some spectre from the world of shadows. All calm conversation, however, now ceased. The men remained standing round the fire, alternately listening, gazing round them, and exchanging a few words of inquiry and observation, for nearly an hour and a half, looking anxiously for the

light of the first morning ray, which they knew could not be very far distant.

At length the youngest of the three said in a low tone, "I wonder Christian Lacy has not returned. He said he would be back by three."

"Perhaps he has thought it better to wait for dawn," replied Giles; "and if I mistake not, by God's blessing the air is growing lighter. Think you not so, Roger?"

"Ay, ay!" answered the other; "day is breaking, and glad enough I am of it."

Two minutes more had not passed, when from a considerable distance was heard the report of a gun, and John Procter exclaimed—

"That is Lacy's shot. He has brought down something I will warrant. He never misses his aim, good lad. He will soon be here."

They waited for near an hour, but the young man they expected did not appear. It had then become broad daylight, and thinking he might have missed his way, they shouted loud to guide

him, their apprehension of the Indians having vanished with the darkness.

No answering shout was returned, and, after a short consultation, they shouldered their weapons, and set out in the direction from which the sound of the shot had seemed to come.

The morning sunlight was gleaming bright and beautiful through the many-tinted trees, and every color that dyes autumn's holiday robe was upon the leaves, from the yellow of the golden streaks of dawn to the crimson of the sun's last rays upon the western clouds. The gleaming river, too, was all gorgeous in the pageantry of light, reflecting skies, and trees, and mottled banks from its liquid mirror, and still the sky changed its hues like a dove's breast as the sun rose, and the deep blue shadows of hill and forest wandered along from the west to the northward, becoming shorter as they went.

The three men searched long and shouted loud, but for a considerable time they heard no

reply ; and they began to entertain serious fears for their young companion's safety.

At length, however, John Procter exclaimed, " Hark ! There is a moaning sound comes from the bank— down there beyond the trees. Listen, listen !"

They all paused as he spoke, and the next moment, with a pale cheek and eager eye, he bounded across the little open spot on which they stood, pushed his way through some trees that fringed the bank of the Merrimac, and swung himself down to a spot where a little bare point jutted out into the water, giving a view of a neat, if not splendid, country-house, and some cultivated grounds, in a bend of the river about a mile and a half distant. A low shrub or two, and a single group of graceful hemlocks, were the only vegetable things that covered the point. All the rest were sand or stone.

But what was there upon it besides ? All lying close together were what seemed the corpses

of three persons. The first, over which John Procter had nearly stumbled as he sprung down the bank, was that of an Indian, painted and dressed for battle. He was dead enough, for a musket-ball had gone right through his heart. A gun, discharged, had dropped from his left hand, apparently as he fell, but in his right he held a long, peculiar sort of knife.

A step beyond this grim sight were the two other persons—one a young man, perhaps twenty years of age—he could not be more—lay partly on his side, partly on his back, with a gun still tightly grasped in his hand, and a stream of blood flowing from his right side. He was a handsome youth, tall, powerful, and well-made, with a fair and somewhat boyish face. His hat had fallen off, and rolled to a little distance, and his long, fair, curly hair was dabbled with his own blood.

Cast upon his bosom, with her face pressed upon his neck and shoulder, was a beautiful

young girl of sixteen or seventeen years of age, and her white garments were also all stained with gore ; but it was not her own.

“ Merciful Father ! ” cried old Giles, as he came down the bank and saw this sad spectacle, with his younger companion, John Procter, gazing at it sternly. “ Why, this is poor young Lacy ; and as I live, Mistress Alice Wainwright. ”

“ To be sure it is, ” replied John, “ what did he volunteer to come here for, but to guard her father’s plantation and house, because he knew that the savages have a spite at the bluff old captain, and had heard as we all did, that they were prowling about. But how she came here, poor thing, I cannot tell. Help me to take her up, Roger, she is living, as you may hear by her moaning. ”

When they raised her, they found that she was not only living, but uninjured, except by the wound that rarely slays at once—sorrow. That, however, had nearly driven her distracted.

They then tried to take the gun from the hand of young Lacy; but in doing so, with a sensation of joy and hope indescribable, his friend, John Procter, felt the fingers of the still warm hand clasp more tightly upon the gun-stock, and he exclaimed—

“He is alive yet, he is alive! Help me here, Roger, to stop this blood. We may save him yet.”

A strange, wild scream burst from the lips of Alice Wainwright, and she fell back fainting again, on the bosom of the old man who was supporting her.

John Procter gave no heed to her. Busy with his friend, he stripped off his neckcloth, and with a certain degree of rude skill, contrived to stop the stream of blood which was welling slowly but fatally from the young man's side. He heard the steps of other persons besides his own party come upon the ground, and eager voices, and many and sad inquiries in anxious

tones ; but he took, or seemed to take, no notice till his task was done.

Then suddenly raising himself and turning round, he said somewhat sharply :—

“ Ay, Captain Wainright. This is young Lacy, and that, your daughter. If it had not been for him, depend upon it, your house would have been full of Indians, and yourself scalped in the grey of the morning ; for he came here expressly to watch for you, while we guarded the passage and the cove above. Why the young lady came hither, or how, I cannot tell—but for no harm, I am sure ; for he is an honest man, and she a good young lady. You can ask her by and by, for she is opening her eyes again ; but just now, if you have any gratitude or kindness, let your people carry this poor lad to your house, and send for the doctor over from the fort.”

The old officer at once gave the orders required ; but, still unsatisfied, he turned to his

daughter, while the rest were raising the young man from the ground, and said in a sad and somewhat reproachful tone :—

“ Alice, why did you come hither ? ”

The poor girl raised her eyes faintly but fully to her father’s face, and answered in a low voice :—

“ Because I heard his gun, and knew that he was watching over us here all last night. Old Jane brought me word he would do so, at sun-down yesterday.”

The father clasped her hand, and kissed her brow, saying—“ Good, true girl ! ”

And the sad procession moved away toward his house.

CHAPTER II.

It may seem a contradiction in terms, but yet there is such a thing as being a rigid and yet a tender-hearted man.

Nothing could be kinder than Captain Wainright's conduct to young Christian Lacy, during a long and tedious convalescence from the terrible wound he had received. For many a day the lad hung between life and death. All questions were forbidden—all conversation—all excitement; and the old officer, keeping strict watch that no one should disturb the sick young man,

walked up and down the long hall that ran through the middle of his dwelling, giving his orders to the sentries, who now surrounded the house, in a very low and subdued tone, and stopping the surgeon every time he came down from the sick room, to inquire, “What hope?”

But toward his daughter—toward his own child, he showed no such great forbearance. The first intelligence—the first assurance that Christian was not dead—that there was a chance of his recovery, had relighted the lamp of the heart for Alice Wainright. Anxious—fearful, she could not help being; but still there was an under-current of happy confidence—oh, blessed security of youth!—which buoyed her up wonderfully. Her father, however, seldom mentioned the youth’s name to her—spoke nought when she expected him to speak—shut up his thoughts and intentions in his own bosom, and seemed to have forgotten altogether that she had gone out

to seek Christian Lacy in the early gray of the morning, and that such an act bespoke no common interest in him.

It is a sad disappointment, when we have done that which we think must force explanation and decision—when we have made up our minds to encounter remonstrance, opposition, anger, for a great end—to do battle, as it were, for love, or friendship, or conviction, or enthusiasm—it is a sad disappointment, I say, to find all our preparation thrown away—no opponent ready to accept the combat, but still a dark adverse cloud hanging upon the horizon, and threatening to fall upon us when we least expect it.

Nevertheless, the days that followed were happy days for Alice Wainright. Hour by hour hope grew up and blossomed. From the cold, doubtful, warning shake of the head, and the dull, “It is possible,” of the surgeon, to the warm sound of “A good deal better,” and the still more cheering, “Good hope, good hope,

Mrs. Alice," and ultimately, " Out of danger, I think," her poor little heart mounted up a ladder of sweet sensations, thinking ever that she was near the top round of joy.

For Christian Lacy, it was enough that he was in the same house as Alice Wainright. That very feeling did him more good than the surgeon, except in the extraction of the ball. But still there were matters which made him anxious and apprehensive, as soon as he was strong enough to think clearly of aught but his own perilous state.

He sent for Captain Wainright, he begged to speak with him; but the Captain did not come. He persisted, however; he sent again and again, so urgently that the old officer at length presented himself, with a very grave, stern face, and told him, in rough tones, to be quiet and keep himself still.

" The doctor says you must not talk on any account," said the master of the house, " and so

if you have a mind to kill yourself, talk away young man."

"I must say a few words, Captain Wainright," replied Lacy, "for you do not know all."

"I don't want to know all, or any thing," growled the old officer.

"But you must hear me for a moment," said the lad, "for your own sake, for Alice's, for mine. The savages have sworn to have revenge on you and yours, for what you did two years ago at Nashua."

"Ay, I taught them," said the old officer, with a grim smile. But the young man continued—

"I heard of it," he said, "from an old Indian woman, a slave of my mother's, and was glad to come with the scouts on that account. The savages sent out one man to spy whether you were over here or not, and depend upon it, though he is dead enough I am sure, they will have tidings and attack you. Now your house

here is a beautiful place, but the walls of Haverhill will be safer for both you and Mistress Alice."

"And what is to become of you if we go?" asked the old officer abruptly; "the doctor says it would be your death to carry you a stone's throw."

"Oh, never mind me," replied the youth, "I shall do well, do not fear. The savages will not come nigh the place when they hear you are gone back, and you can send some one over in the day, from time to time, to see I have all I want."

"Pooh, pooh!" said Captain Wainwright, turning away and walking toward the door. But before he reached it, he stopped and said—"You are a good lad, Christian, but don't be afraid. I have had news of the swine as well as you, and have made all safe. If the red-skins come here, they shall have worse than they had at Nashua; for I have men in the house, and round the house, enough to pepper their jackets—if they

had any to pepper ;” and with a laugh at his own jest he walked away.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to say a word or two of the situation of the house in which the wounded youth was lodged, and the places adjacent. Haverhill, or Haverhill-point, as it is frequently called, to distinguish it from a place similarly named, at some distance, is now a growing town of no mean importance, containing some thousand inhabitants, and connected with the south shore of the Merrimac by two handsome bridges—if not more. There are banks, manufactories, several churches, and more sects ; and vessels of a hundred tons burden and upward, come and lie peaceably between it and Bradford on the opposite bank, also an important place. The land, though not the richest in the world, is well and generally cultivated, and no one who sees the scene in the present day, could form any idea from its aspect of what it was some century and a half ago.

Then Haverhill was a small village—one of the extreme outposts of civilisation, with a little rude fort, in which ordinarily dwelt the commandant of a small body of soldiers, a single church, and a population united by community of danger and exertion. Whenever the Alloquin, or St. Francis Indians, thought fit to make a descent upon the Bay State, or Province of Massachusetts Bay, as it was then called, Haverhill was sure to feel their first fury. Nor were these descents infrequent, especially during the time when dissensions existed between France and England; for the French were the first, and at no time tardy, to employ the fierce and reckless courage of the savages, against their civilised neighbours. As an instance of this, it may be stated that within ten years, toward the close of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, Haverhill was three or four times attacked, and twice plundered and burned by the Indians.

Nevertheless, with the characteristic energy and perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon race, the inhabitants left alive, aided by fresh settlers, still raised it from its ruins, still spread cultivation around; and at the time I speak of, several farms, with neat houses upon them, belonging to citizens of Haverhill, appeared upon the opposite bank of the river, and testified their resolution to subdue the waste, and make the forest blossom like a garden. Amongst these was the farm I have mentioned, belonging to the commandant of the place, an enterprising but ill-paid soldier, who thought he might as well employ the abundant idleness of his occupation—when he was not fighting the French or the Indians, in cultivating a rather fine tract of land on the south side of the river, which he had received by grant from the crown. The house itself, built by the money which he had received as the marriage portion of his dead wife, was a very good one for the period—large, roomy, and solid; and not

without the usual precautions against surprise. The upper stories all round projected over the lower, so that any body of savages approaching to drive in or set fire to the door or windows, could be assailed from above with a shower of musket-balls, which not rarely put them to flight before they could effect their purpose. The approaches, too, were defended by palisades, and various contrivances for impeding the advance of an enemy, and exposing him to the fire from the windows; and now, ten soldiers from the fort, with a serjeant at their head, were collected in the dwelling, so that there seemed little cause for fear, though the hostile attitude of the Indians was well known to the commandant.

His precautions were sufficient, indeed, and the next month passed peacefully enough. At the end of that time, however, the increasing coldness of the weather rendered it necessary that the family of Captain Wainright should remove to warmer quarters in the village. But

young Christian Lacy was now well enough to be moved, and Alice had the happiness of sitting beside him in the boat which ferried them across.

It was little she dared say to him, or he to her, in truth; for in the stern of the boat sat the captain himself, with a somewhat gloomy aspect, and a keen eye upon them. Love has ways of expressing itself, however, without words, and their little row across was a pleasant one.

Young Lacy thought that he might now very well be allowed to sit up the whole day, and Captain Wainright saw that he would soon be able to do so at all events; but for that day, at least, he sent him to his room immediately after their arrival, and before night fell, he presented himself suddenly to his young guest.

“Now listen to me, lad,” he said with a grave face, “you will soon be well enough to go about the house like a tame cat, and yet not well enough to be sent home in this sharp weather. I dare say you reckon upon a pleasant time of it,

and look out to make love to my daughter Alice. But mark me, I will have no love-making. I don't say what may happen by and by—I neither approve nor disapprove. All I say is, you are both too young to marry—neither I nor your mother can well afford to set you up; and in the meantime, you must give me your word there shall be no love making while you are staying here.”

It was a hard demand; but after a moment's thought, Christian Lacy replied, “Well, I will promise on one condition, captain. Now don't look fierce, for the condition is a small one—only that you tell dear Alice the engagement you have laid me under, otherwise she will certainly think it strange that I do not make love to her.”

Captain Wainright laughed aloud at the youth's simple frankness, but he answered good humouredly, “That is fair enough—that is fair enough. I will tell her, and put her under the

same bond, too—for girls can sometimes make love to lads as well as lads to them.

The promise was fulfilled on all parts, though, to say truth, Alice and Christian were sometimes inclined to laugh outright when left alone together at the padlock put upon their lips, when their hearts were as open to each other as if they had had as many tongues as Fame, and as full liberty to use them. However, the time passed on. Christian Lacy each day grew stronger and stronger, till at length, a sleigh going over to Salem, took him on his way to his mother's farm, comforting himself with the thought "Now I will make love to Alice whenever I meet her. My promise is at an end."

CHAPTER III.

“WHENEVER I meet her!” Who can ever say in parting with one we love, when we shall ever meet again. Young Lacy proposed to go back for a day or two to Haverhill as soon as the first mild weather cleared the snow off the ground. There seemed no impediment—no possible difficulty. His mother was well to do in the world—there were plenty of hands to work the farm, and his absence for a few days, even in spring, could be of no consequence. It was destined that it should be otherwise, however; that his

confident expectation of soon seeing Alice again should be disappointed suddenly—sadly.

What was it that Fate was taking out of his dark and terrible store-house to use as an impediment in his way?

You shall hear. All went on smoothly, nay, joyfully. His mother was a woman well stricken in years—kind, unselfish, truly Christian. She listened to his tale of love for Alice Wainright, whom she had seen and knew well, with great satisfaction. She had always thought that where ample means existed, it was well for a young man to marry early; and she knew Alice to be good and good-tempered as well as beautiful. The old lady expressed her satisfaction at once; but she went on and pondered over the matter for a day or two. At length, however, she broke silence with a proposal that seemed to put all further difficulties at an end. The farm was hers for life, and she now offered to give it to her son, he securing to her a certain income from it, and

giving her, as she said, “a corner at the fire-side, to see him and his wife happy, and nurse the babies.”

“Go into Salem, my dear boy,” she said, “have all the papers drawn out, and then ride over to Haverhill and tell old Captain Wainright that you have enough to keep a family.”

I must not dwell upon the young man's joy and gratitude. He went into the town, and gave the directions required; but lawyers were slow in those days, and for several weeks they kept him with difficulties and delays. He went into Salem day after day, and still returned disappointed, much to the grief of his mother. But other things arose to create gloom and despondency. On his return from Salem, Christian Lacy, on more than one occasion, brought news of much disturbance in the minds of the people of the town, from strange and unheard of events which had taken place in the neighbourhood.

I shall have to dwell more particularly on those events in another tale, but I must notice them

briefly here, as connected with the history of Christian Lacy. The people of Salem were a simple and enthusiastic race, primitive in their manners, and retaining in their seclusion many of those popular delusions which were rapidly disappearing from the rest of the world. They were by no means stupid or dull ; but the finest and highest wrought minds are those most especially liable to be affected by the excesses of the imagination when little intercourse exists with the general world, and thought is left to brood over one particular train of ideas. It would seem that in these circumstances, what would be called insanity in the case of individuals, will often affect whole communities—a sort of temporary monomania will seize them ; and many of the strongest-minded on other subjects will be tainted upon the one peculiar topic. But the inhabitants of Salem and its neighbourhood were surrounded by persons all affected more or less in the same manner as themselves. The same enthusiastic

and credulous tone of mind existed throughout the whole of New England, and it especially dwelt upon the actual personality of Satan, as the great enemy of mankind, with all the consequences which have been drawn, rightly or wrongly, from that doctrine. Nor were they alone in their views upon these subjects. Some of the wisest and the best of men shared them to the fullest extent. The great and pious Baxter himself was a thorough believer not only in the power of the devil to assume a corporeal form, and to present himself visibly to the eyes of men ; but also in his capability of acting upon mankind through the instrumentality of others, who had become his slaves, and of endowing the latter for the most frightful purposes, and under a written contract, with superhuman powers of torturing or injuring mankind. Such were the opinions of Baxter in the midst of civilized England at this very period ; and every part of his opinions he was ready and able to sustain with much power

both from holy writ and the general philosophy of the day.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that a body of men enthusiastic by inheritance, cut off from wide and general communication with the world, amongst whom natural philosophy, then in its infancy every where, had made small progress, with minds harassed by numerous anxieties, accustomed to strange and fearful events, ever looking forth for dangers and disasters, and trusting to the Bible as their only guide both in science and in faith, should recognize from the heart, and with full conviction, the existence of beings and powers which their Bible distinctly pointed to—ay, and should receive all that superstition and fancy had added to explain or illustrate the mode in which those beings and powers acted on mankind?

Anything but strange, methinks. But at all events, so it was. Reports of witchcraft were of daily occurrence. Spirits were seen—devils

appeared. The woods and forests nurtured phantoms in their gloomy shades. Events which no one could explain were happening daily—ships were seen in the air—strange figures—unearthly sights and sounds abounded; and, what between the oppressed and overburdened state of the colony, the daily perils and disasters, and a strict and somewhat morose religious system, a gloomy, fanciful, superstitious frame of mind was produced in all men, which prompted to the belief of all the diabolical agency which the most fanciful imagination could conceive.

Men of healing tell us that predispositions to disease often exist even for many years before any tangible symptoms of illness make their appearance, but that nothing is wanting except an exciting cause to bring the malady into fatal activity. Such as I have described had been the state of the popular mind in Salem and its vicinity for a long time before the events oc-

curred of which Christian Lacy brought home to his mother the intelligence.

The first items of news were small and highly laughable. "Do you know, dear mother," he said, more to change the subject than any thing else, "people say that Mr. Parris's daughter Betty, and his niece Abigail Williams, are very ill in an odd sort of way, falling into strange fits, and crawling under beds, and in cupboards: and Ann Putnam, that saucy minx, who once said she thought David a worse man than Saul, is taken in the same way. The doctors have been sent for, and declare that all three are bewitched."

"Pooh—nonsense," replied the old lady; "young maids' fantasies, my dear boy!" and there the subject dropped.

Not long after, after another visit to the town, young Lacy returned with a grave and alarmed air. Even the business he had so much at heart was forgotten, and he broke forth at

once, saying, “ This business at Salem village, mother, is growing very serious. Those three girls have been worse than ever—one of them in strong fits all the time the ministers were praying for her. They adjured her to tell who it is has bewitched her ; and all three cried out upon Maggy, the Indian woman, who does the house-work at Mr. Parris’s.”

“ Wicked little wretches !” said old Mrs. Lacy.

“ But, indeed, mother, there must be some truth in it,” rejoined the young man, almost shocked at his mother’s incredulity, for the infection or popular belief had touched him in his frequent visits to Salem, while his mother had remained out of its reach. “ The old woman was immediately apprehended, and put in the jail with irons on her ; and after a while she confessed the whole—acknowledged that she had made a compact with Satan himself, and had inflicted all this evil upon the children by the power he gave her.”

Mrs. Lacy sat down at the table by which she had been standing, aghast at what she had heard. But she was a strong-minded woman, and after gazing in her son's face for a moment or two, she leaned her head upon her hand and pondered.

At length she said, " This is all nonsense, my dear boy. God would not permit such things. Doubtless there have been witches in days of old, for the Bible says it; and there may be others; but I have remarked that they were never suffered to exercise their power but upon great occasions—such as when she of Endor called up the spirit of Samuel. Balaam, too, I suppose, was a sort of witch, but still he could not do or speak any thing but what God permitted; and we do not find any of them allowed to torture young children. This poor old creature—this Indian woman—no better than a heathen savage at best, has doubtless some of the old superstitions of her people, who

are full of wild fancies, and she has been frightened, or perhaps persuaded into believing, or at least confessing, that she has had a hand in this affair. Besides, we cannot tell how much of this confession is really her own, how much has been made for her. Our God is a good God, my son, and will not deliver us into the hands of the enemy so easily. It is all nonsense, be you sure of that.”

Her arguments seemed so convincing that Christian Lacy remained satisfied ; and when he returned to Salem, four days after, he joined a little knot of people who were assembled near the church, to hear what further had occurred in this affair of witchcraft, and to express his doubts of the truth of the whole story. He was amazed and shocked, however, to hear that no less than ten persons had been accused, or, as it was called, “ cried out upon,” by the children, and others supposed to be bewitched, and that more of them had been committed to prison, and

loaded with heavy irons. He asked their names, and found that all were people of excellent character, many of them eminently pious, and amongst them was the mother of his own oldest friend John Procter.

The young man's indignation broke forth rashly, and he boldly exclaimed that it was impossible such people could be guilty, adding, "My mother says it is all nonsense; and I suppose no one will suspect her of being a witch or in league with Satan."

"I don't know that," said a small voice near.

Instantly aware of his own imprudence, he looked round for the speaker, but could not discover who it was that had uttered the ominous words amidst the crowd of men and women, boys and girls, around.

He hastened away, however, visited the lawyers, again met with disappointment at their hands, and then remounting his horse, rode

homeward. As he passed over a little picturesque elevation, commanding a beautiful view of the town of Salem and the adjacent country, he saw four men erecting a gallows—and with a shudder at the sight he pursued his way. When next he returned to Salem, that gallows bore a human body quivering in the air.

This time the papers were ready for him ; but the joy and hope in his heart were all clouded by the state in which he found the town. Terror and consternation were in every heart. The great mass of the people believed firmly that Satan was let loose upon the world ; that the countenance and protection of God were withdrawn from their community ; that evil eyes were upon them, and that there were multitudes around who could inflict ruin and misery upon them at their pleasure. The wisest and the best shared in these terrors ; the learned, and often the most pious, countenanced and promoted them. Gloomy despondency sat upon every

face, and those whose minds were too strong for credulity, and too clear for superstition, saw perils and evils of a kind much more serious. The judges, the jurors, affected by the same delusion as the rest of the community, had already shown that every case was prejudged before it was tried. To be accused was to be condemned; to be condemned was to be murdered. No chance of escape existed but in confession, and the numbers who, under the influence of terror, did actually confess, only added to the popular madness, approved the malicious accuser, and justified the slaughter of the innocent. If any man had an enemy, his life was in that enemy's power.

It was this last consideration which affected young Christian Lacy the most deeply; for his mother's arguments had cleared his mind of the first impression which the general delusion had made upon it. He did not, indeed, know that he had an enemy in the world—and in truth he

had not, for his frank and kindly nature had secured him general regard. But there was a dread—an undefinable sensation of apprehension upon his mind as he rode homeward; and his first proposal to his mother was that they should both quit that part of the country for a time, and travel to some other colony.

The good old lady, however, only laughed at his fears, and soon found means of quieting them. She talked to him of Alice Wainright; urged him to set out speedily, now that all was settled, to demand her hand, and busied him with preparations for his departure.

Four days passed in this manner; and on the morning of the fifth—a bright summer morning as ever shone upon a lover's way—he kissed his mother tenderly, mounted his horse, and with his saddle bags behind him, set out upon his journey toward Haverhill. Between that place and Salem extended many a mile of forest; and the road, to say sooth, was none of the best or

smoothest ever constructed. Lacy calculated upon getting to his journey's end easily just after Captain Wainright's mid-day meal, when, he had remarked, that the old officer was ever the most placable. He, therefore, spared his horse's speed at the first part of the day's march, knowing that the good beast would at any time make up for delay in case of need; and although a lover's impatience is proverbial, and all the wings of all the birds in the world have been called upon to assist the progress of young gentlemen in his predicament, yet love, when it is clearly demonstrated that there is no possible use of being in a hurry, is apt to take refuge in another of its propensities. It is all opposition, in short—a moody sort of passion, and when not all impatience, it is the most sauntering affection in the world. Now Christian Lacy knew that there was no object to be obtained by reaching Haverhill before one, or half-past one; that he should not see Alice, and should only find her father in

one of those empty-stomached moods which are unfavourable to such suits as his. The distance, I believe—for I have never measured it—is about twenty-one or two miles as the crow flies—half as much again by the road he travelled. He had, however, seven hours and more before him, and he went slowly and thoughtfully through the dawn-illuminated forest, dreaming sweet dreams with a slight shade of melancholy—perhaps of gloom—tempering the brighter colors of fancy, and giving a depth of tone to thoughts which might otherwise have been light enough.

He had proceeded about seven miles in this manner when he suddenly heard the sound of a horse's foot coming rapidly on the road behind him.

Those were not days in which any man could afford to be brought into close proximity with another without giving a look to ascertain what sort of a person his new companion was likely to prove, and Lacy turned round to see who fol-

lowed so fast. The first glance showed him the form of old Giles Cary—a man far advanced in years, but of a bold, stern, resolute character, which prompted him to undertake tasks from which many a younger man was apt to shrink. He was a religious man, too ; but strong passions had more than once led him into errors, which he regretted bitterly, and which no one condemned more severely than himself.

The old man was galloping at full speed over a rough and stony road, with little regard for his horse's knees, or his own neck ; and when he saw Christian Lacy turn his head he made an eager sign for him to stop. The youth instantly drew in his rein, and in a moment old Cary was by his side.

“ Christian,” he said, with sturn abruptness, “ I have bad news for you. Your mother—your dear, good mother, has been apprehended, charged with witchcraft by that young fiend, Ann Putnam. Indeed, several have cried out against

her. I was at the house when it happened. She told me you were riding for Haverhill to get married to Alice Wainright, and I came after to let you know. What will you do, boy? Your mother is a dead woman. None escape now who are once accused; unless they confess, indeed—unless they confess—which please God, Martha Lacy will never do so long as her conscience is clear, and her trust in the Lord unshaken. What will you do, I say?”

Lacy had remained motionless on his horse, looking down on the road like one stupified; but when the old man ended by repeating the question, “What will you do?” He looked up full in his face, and replied in a stern and abrupt tone as his own, “Go back, save my mother, or die with her.”

CHAPTER IV.

It was midnight in the town of Salem. The air was hot and oppressive. Heavy clouds were rolling up, putting out star by star; and there was thunder already muttering in the distance. Every thing in the town was hushed and still; every light was out; people sought what repose they might find in the midst of the dark scenes and terrible passions that surrounded them. Slowly and quietly up the main street of the place came a young man leading a horse by the bridle. The horse itself seemed to feel either the oppressive weight of the air or the necessity of

caution, for its steps were as silent upon the sandy road as if poor Lear's project had been realized, and it had been shod with felt. It kicked its foot against no stone, it rattled not its heavy bit.

The young man led it on to a place where two roads or streets crossed. At one corner was a low building, with a sort of shed in front, and into the wooden wall thereof was fixed a hook for the purpose of fastening up a horse at the door. At the opposite corner was a much larger and more solid building, with no window on the ground floor. It had the aspect of a jail. The young man stopped at the former, and cast the bridle of his horse over the iron hook, and just as he did so, another figure appeared coming round the corner and approached him.

"Ah, Giles Cary," said the youth, "are you back so soon? Did you see Alice? What did Captain Wainright say?"

"I saw Alice," replied old Giles Cary, in the

same low tone which the other had used, "and she said God bless you and give you success ; you are not to think of her, she said, till your mother is beyond all danger. The captain said very little : only that you are a good lad and a bold. But now, Christian, are you all prepared? How will you manage not to wake the jailer?"

"He will sleep sound—or seem to do so," replied the lad. "I am only afraid the bars of the ladder I have made will rattle as my mother draws it up."

As he spoke he took down from his horse's back a ladder he had made of ropes and rounded bars and showed it to his old companion.

"I will help you," said old Giles. "We two can keep it steady. But does poor Martha know? Is she ready?"

"I saw her yesterday," said her son, "after they had tortured her at the examination. She is in an upper room, for the dungeon is choke full, and she will let down a string from the

window. I dare say the dear soul is looking out at us now, if we could but see her. It cannot be more than sixteen feet to the windows."

"Not fourteen," answered old Giles; and they moved across to the opposite corner where the jail stood, and walked on feeling along the wall.

A moment after, young Lacy stopped: his hand had come against a string; and putting down the ladder on the ground, he fastened the string tightly to one of the rounds. As he did so, he felt the cord pulled gently, to show him that some one above was aware of his proceedings. Then lifting the roll of ladder as high as he could in his arms, he said in a low voice, "Pull up."

His directions were instantly obeyed, and round by round the ladder was uncoiled and drawn up, till it reached from the window to the ground in an oblique line.

"How will she fasten it above?" asked Giles Cary in a whisper.

“ By a rope to her bedstead,” answered Lacy; and then came a moment of listening suspense.

The two men held the lower part of the ladder firm with all their strength, and looked up. Several minutes elapsed, and then a figure, scarce distinguishable in the darkness, was seen to make its way through the open window and begin to descend the ladder. Christian Lacy’s heart beat quick with hope and joy : his enterprise so far was successful. Step by step the good old woman descended ; they could hear the clank of the heavy fetters upon her ankles ; but that was the only sound stirring except the thunder, which now rolled nearer and nearer. She was within a few feet of the ground, and her son was holding out his left hand to guide her, when suddenly she missed a step and fell. No sound of pain or fear escaped from her lips ; the distance was not great ; and young Lacy partly broke the fall by catching her arm. He hoped she was not hurt, and bent over her to raise her up ; but the good

old woman whispered, "Take me in your arms, my boy, and fix me on the horse. Is that Giles Cary? Thank you, Giles, thank you. God reward you. I have hurt my leg in the fall. The fetters caught the rope and threw me down."

As noiselessly as possible, Christian raised his dear mother in his arms and carried her to the horse's side, placed her on the pillion which had been covered by the ladder, and then asked if she were right. She answered, "Yes;" and with one grasp of the hand to old Giles, he got into the saddle, and rode away in a different direction from that in which he had come.

Old Cary remained upon the ground and looked around. All was still and quiet, and the old man busied himself for an hour in smoothing with his bare hand the traces of the horse's feet along the road.

In the meantime Christian Lacy rode on at increasing speed, and his mother's arms clasped tightly round him. They said little, for he was

eager to put miles between himself and Salem, and the old lady was rarely a great tattler.

Occasionally, indeed, a low moan escaped from her lips, as if she were in pain or deep grief; and her son twice turned his head and said, "I hope you are not hurt by the fall, dearest mother?"

"Not much," replied Martha, "ride on, my boy. My ankle pains me a little, and the irons are burdensome."

"You will soon have them off," replied her son, and on he spurred.

The darkness was profound, except when the broad flash of the lightning spread light for an instant over forest or moor. Large drops of rain began to fall, and Lacy contrived to pull off his coat without checking his speed, and to throw it round his mother.

They passed over two or three gentle hills, and then dashed through a mile or two of forest ground, with rocks, and trees, and branches

bursting forth upon the sight in the glare of the electric fire. Then they came to a more open ground—a wide-spread, barren moor. It was called the Great Pasture, and extended over many weary miles, diversified by small patches of wood, and sometimes broken by pieces of swampy land, a mile or two in width, covered by stunted bushes, with here and there a large mass of stone, rolled by some great convulsion from afar.

Mother and son knew the desolate spot well, for they had frequently crossed it; but it was necessary now to go with greater caution, as the road was lost on the moor, and many spots were dangerous. Slackening his speed, young Lacy turned toward his mother saying, “I fear you must be very wet; but it is clearing now, dear mother, and the moon will soon be up.”

“I am wet, my boy,” answered the old lady, “but that is not the worst, Christian. I cannot go much farther, for my leg pains me sadly. It

is broken, my dear child, and I know not what to do."

A faint, cold sickness came over young Christian Lacy; but he was stout-hearted and resolute. The object was to cheer and support his suffering parent, and he would show no weakness.

"That is bad—that is bad, dear mother," he said with a deep sigh; "but we must abide God's will. However, where I am taking you is not far now. Last fall, I had some trees and bushes cut, to hide me while I was fowling down at Tapley's brook. There is a good dry bit of ground there, in the very heart of the great Blueberry swamp, and large boulder stones all round. You can lie hid there till some change happens, and I can come to you every night and bring you all you want. You will not be afraid, dear mother?"

"No, Christian," replied the old woman, "God will not forget me, I know; and my son will not forget me."

“So may God help me,” answered the young man, “as I think of nothing else, and do nothing else, but tend you till I put you in safety, my mother. But look, the moon is rising, and that is a blessing, for there is but one way through the swamp not twenty yards broad.”

Young Lacy kept his word well. That night, with felled wood and bushes, and some of the large boulder stones, he built his mother a little wigwam, hidden from all eyes by the rock and brushwood. Some clothing for her, some bedding and other comforts, he had brought upon his strong and patient horse. He contrived, too—all in the same night—to file the fetters from her ankles. Nay, more, to the best of his ability he set the broken limb as he had once seen a surgeon do in the case of one of his young companions. He cut splints from branches of wood, bound them tightly round with his cravat, and got the broken ends of the bone into their places, much to his poor mother’s relief. There is no

telling what a son can do in behalf of a parent whom he loves.

He was rewarded by her blessing, and after having lingered as long as he dared, he knelt down beside her, prayed with her, kissed her tenderly, and rode by a long circuit back to his farm.

Night after night, for many long months, Christian Lacy appeared at the solitary hut he had built for his mother; and each time he came he brought a store of comforts for her. Storm or tempest delayed him not; no dangers frightened him; no fatigues were too much for her beloved sake. No one knew of his absence; for he always set out after every one but himself had retired to rest, and returned before day-break. He was always upon the farm—active, busy, during the hours of light. People suspected him, it is true, and he did not pass unwatched; but he contrived to evade all spies, and the laboring men were too fond of him to notice or to tell,

that one or other of the horses was always found weary in the morning. He had no confident but old Giles Cary, and with him a secret was quite safe, for, as he showed in the manner of his own death, which I may have to tell hereafter, no torture could wring one word from the lips of the resolute old man.

Christian Lacy's care and exertions were rewarded. Temperate through life, and naturally of a fine constitution, poor Mrs. Lacy not only recovered from all the fatigues and sorrows and anguish she had endured, but the fractured bone reunited easily, and at the end of two months she could walk out for a while in the autumn moonlight, supported on her son's arm.

It was thus one night in the end of September that they had gone forth from the hut and sat down upon one of the large stones, when, to Lacy's surprise and dread, they beheld a man come forth from behind another mass of rock. At once the youth drew a pistol from his pocket,

resolved to die should need be in his mother's defence; but the next instant the voice of good Captain Wainright sounded in his ears.

“ Ah, Kit,” he said, “ thou art a good lad indeed! God bless thee, boy—God will bless thee. I had no notion of all this;” and he cast his arms round the lad and hugged him hard.

“ I came over to your place to-day,” he continued in explanation, “ to see what had become of you, and why you did not come to see Alice, knowing from old Cary that you had got your mother out of limbo. But my horse cast a shoe—I had to get it put on—I was late, and as I was riding by the lane towards the farm I saw you cross the end on horseback. I followed you along the road, and here I am to thank God for having shown me such a sight. Be as good a husband as you are a son and my Alice will be a happy girl.”

More explanations ensued. It seemed that the old officer had been seized with one of those

gloomy feelings in regard to his own fate which people call presentiments. He felt as if some evil were about to happen to him, and anxious to remove his daughter to a place of greater safety than Haverhill, he had ridden over to give his consent to her marriage with Christian Lacy, and to urge that it should take place at once.

When he found how the youth was occupied, however, he would not press the point at all. He saw where his greatest duty lay, and that it was one which could be trusted to none other. But by this time, from various indications, men began to judge that the popular delusion was beginning to subside—that the fit of madness was coming to an end. It was agreed that Christian should continue to tend upon his mother till she could return to her home in safety, or till he could remove her to some secure place; and then that he should come at once to Haverhill and wed his Alice.

The next fortnight passed full of joyful hopes.

The people of New England recovered from the epidemic frenzy which had seized them, as rapidly as they had received the contagion. Judges and jurors trembled when they thought of what they had done; the clergy repented the having urged on the madness, with tears, and prayers, and fasting. The prison-doors were thrown open; the gallows torn down, and Martha Lacy saved, nurtured, protected by her son, was brought home in a sort of triumph to her own house.

Four days after Christian Lacy set out with two or three companions to claim his beloved bride; and high and joyfully beat his heart as he mounted his horse.

Oh, the cup and the lips! the cup and the lips!

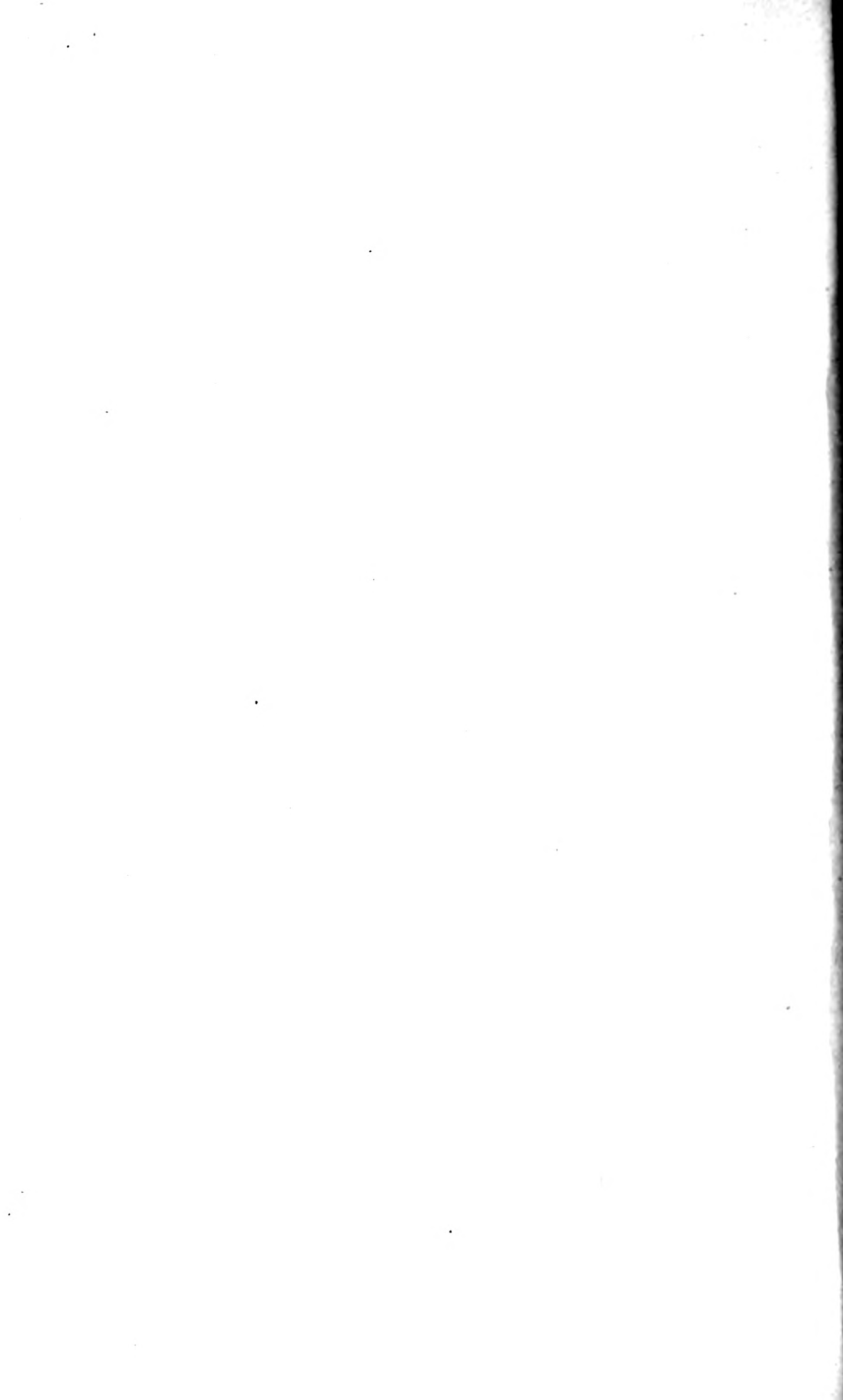
Gayly, merrily they rode on, through brown forest and amidst gray rock. They saw the Merrimac gleaming before them; they caught sight of Captain Wainright's country-house and

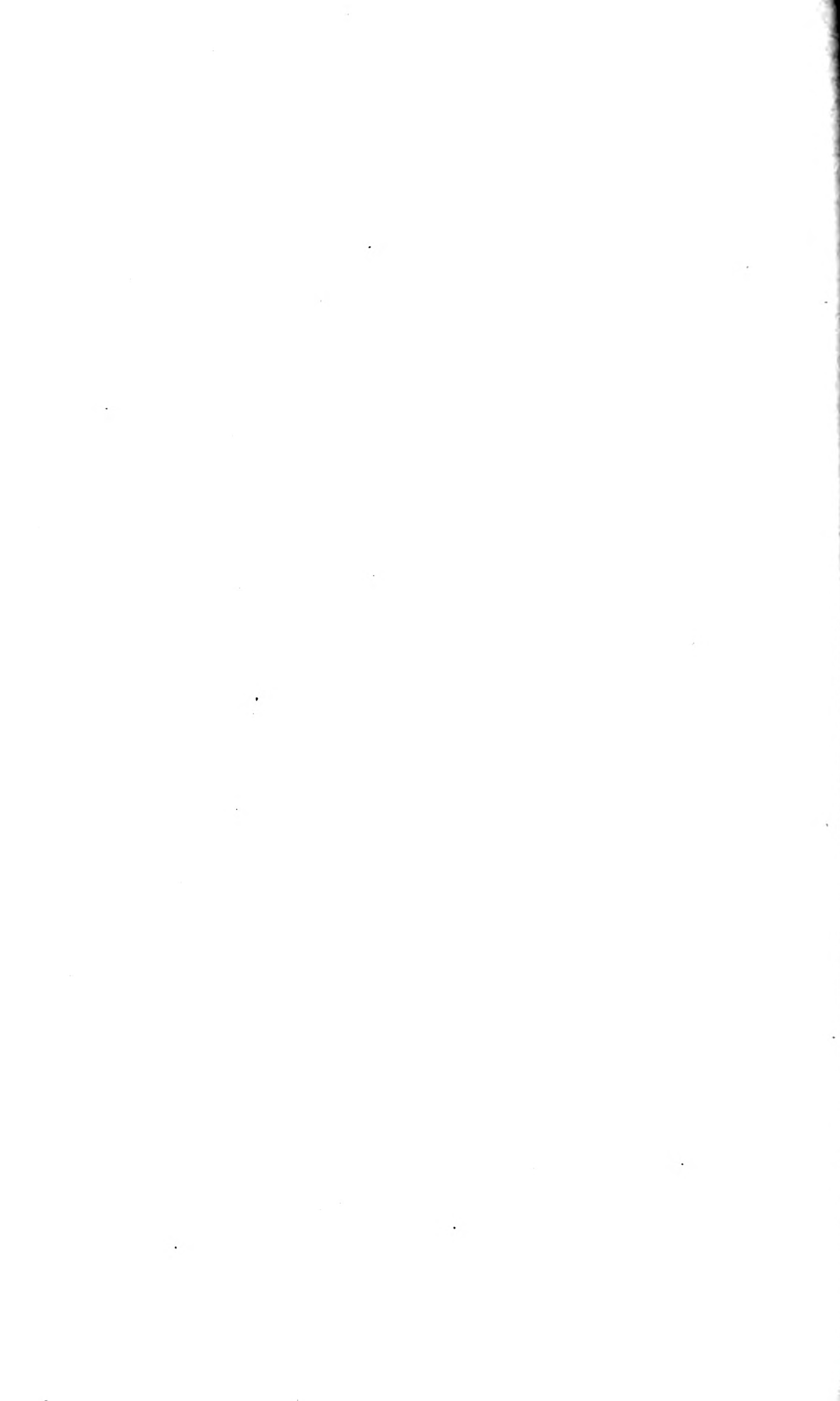
cultivated fields on the south bank. The next instant they perceived Haverhill itself. But then every one drew his rein. There was something different in the aspect of the town. The church was gone ; the stockade of the fort was not to be seen !

Low, low sunk the heart of Christian Lacy. Anything is better than suspense ; and he was about to urge his horse on again ; when suddenly from the low wood on the left, a female figure crept forth—gazed for an instant at the party, and then, with a scream, darted toward the young man. He was off his horse in an instant, and Alice Wainright was in his arms.

“What is the matter, dearest Alice? What has happened?” he cried.

“I know not—I know not all,” she answered, pressing her hand upon her well-nigh distracted brow. “But I am sure the Indians have surprised the town and burnt it. We who were over at the farm heard shots fired, and





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